Southeast Asia Background Series No. 8

Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals of the 20th Century

Howard M. Federspiel

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About the Author

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Chapter 1

Introduction

There are some matters in Islam that are defined in great detail and remain strongly resistant to change. Prayer and other rites of worship, dating to the seventh century, are witness to that continuity. The belief in a never-changing law of God is unchallenged among Muslims. On the other hand, there is a rich intellectual tradition in Islam where historically Muslims have explored, probed, and analysed to expand knowledge. The scholars of the Islamic Golden Age in the ninth to thirteenth centuries at Baghdad and Andalusia were widely known throughout most of the world and were highly influential in creating the classical flowering of Islamic civilization. The physician and mathematician Ibn Sina (d. 1037), the philosopher Ibn Rushd (d. 1198), the geographer al-Mas'udi (d. 956), the historian Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), the man-of-letters Ibn Hazm (d. 1064), and the biographer Ibn Khallikan (d. 1282) were leading contributors to that great intellectual adventure. Each made significant contributions to human knowledge.

More important to this study, there were also political thinkers during that era, notably al-Farabi (d. 950), al-Mawardi (d. 1058), and Nizam ul-Mulk (d. 1092). Al-Farabi envisioned the perfect society ruled by an educated elite, where every citizen was placed where he would do the best job for the good of all. Al-Mawardi suggested that the ruler should be chosen by the leaders of society

based on his moral awareness, religious knowledge, and wisdom. Nizam ul-Mulk outlined the practical sense and strength of leadership that the good ruler should develop. Even as Muslims revere their law and their commitment to worship, they have been equally proud of this history of intellectual exploration and accomplishment.

Within Southeast Asia there have been centres of Islamic culture as well, particularly in arts and letters. Melaka in the fifteenth century, Aceh and the north Java cities in the sixteenth century, Palembang and Makassar in the seventeenth century, and central Java from the fifteenth to nineteenth century all provided illustrious royal courts, scholarship, and promotion of several art forms. Islamic themes, concepts, and subject matter were influential to different degrees in these centres of culture. Aceh was reflective of Islamic influences coming from the West. In Java, Islam was more muted, and other values and themes were used as well. The scholarly and intellectual tradition has been an important facet of Islam in Southeast Asia as these examples indicate.

INTELLECTUALS AND THEIR EFFORT

In this writing the term *intellectual* is used to define individuals who deal with the underlying values of society, nation, or humanity. An intellectual is concerned with examining society and providing guidelines into the way values are expressed in contemporary life. It is easy to confuse the "intellectual" with "leader", who may speak and write authoritatively, but is fundamentally different. Leaders have the ability to mobilize small or large groups to the support of a nation, cause, or group. Consequently, the utterances and the writings of leaders are intended to speak to political problems and direct affairs to

achieve certain results. The intellectual may be highly influential and certainly wants certain outcomes that he has envisaged, but he is seldom very specific about paths of action to be taken and is usually not concerned with mobilizing others except incidentally. There are exceptions, however, as the case of Sukarno illustrates, who was both an intellectual and a political leader.

In the same way an "intellectual" is not the same as a "scholar", although intellectuals are almost always scholars. There are, of course, many types of scholars, particularly in Islam, a religion that places great stress on the development of mystical, jurisprudential, and theological interpretations, which demands scholarship for mastery of the subject matter. Large numbers of scholars have been available to do that work, and they have concentrated on the production of sermons, commentaries, jurisprudential opinions, and treatises about the proper lessons of religion for the believer to follow. Intellectuals almost always transcended these matters and concentrated on the purpose of religion in contemporary society and the manifestation of religion in new guises. In essence the intellectual is a scholar with a particular outlook and mission, that of making Islamic lessons applicable to political and societal trends.

In this study we turn to Indonesia in the twentieth century and examine the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals of the recent past and their approaches in dealing with the problems that faced Indonesian Muslims at that time. Like their intellectual ancestors in Islamic history, these recent Indonesian intellectuals carefully examined the society in which they lived. On one level they studied the original and historical teachings of Islam and attempted to fit that message to the Southeast Asian region. On another level they reacted to the great waves of culture that arrived from Europe, North America, and Asia throughout the twentieth century. They did all of this at a time when

the Indonesian nation was forming itself, beginning with the nationalist movements of the early part of the century when the Dutch controlled the archipelago, and continuing into the last half of the century when Indonesia was an independent nation.

Significantly the intellectuals' effort was important in shaping the Indonesian Muslim community and, consequently, the character of that community was strikingly different at the end of the twentieth century than it was at the end of the nineteenth century. At the earlier point in time the community was marked by incomplete conversion to Islamic institutions and was mixed with animist values. Much of the animism was expunged, and the standard teachings of Islam known widely elsewhere were given new status and attention. Intellectuals showed the way, and Islamic activists did the work that led to the actual change. At the same time Muslim intellectuals were not very successful in determining the direction of state-building in independent Indonesia. Other intellectual trends outside Islam proved more important in that national effort, but, still, Muslim intellectuals were part of the debate about the shape of Indonesian state, government, and political system. Certainly they were sometimes influential in those discussions, but seldom had their thinking accepted as state policy.

Of course there were all sorts of people involved in the development of the Indonesian state, with differing viewpoints about tactics and ultimate goals. Some thought on a practical level, others justified their actions, and still others thought in theoretical terms, so that sorting the "intellectuals" from "ideologues" and "activists" was difficult. In this study the lines of thinking described are those that have come to be recognized as important by the scholars who have reviewed the era and come to conclusions about it. Since the intellectual scene was rather

wide and it developed in a very diverse culture, identification and context is important. To that end some details about personal background has been included so that influences on particular people are apparent and the nature of their intellectual thought can be placed in context.

Equally important, there is some information provided concerning the communication used by these intellectuals to spread their message. In the first part of the century, oral communication was important, while at the conclusion of the period a considerable number of media existed. Again there was considerable change and development during the course of the century.

THE INDONESIAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY

The composition of the Muslim community of Indonesia had some special characteristics. Throughout the twentieth century between 85 and 90 per cent of the Indonesian people considered themselves to be Muslim, as reflected on census forms. But of this number between 35 and 50 per cent actually identified with the functioning Islamic community of Islam, i.e., they prayed, fasted, undertook the pilgrimage, and were concerned about making Islam an important part of their lives. This group, termed *committed Muslims* in this study, is identified as the Islamic community to which the intellectuals related. The intellectuals themselves sometimes commented on the different "levels" of identification with Islam, as we shall see in the last historical period.

Nominal Muslims did not regard standard religious values as particularly important in personal, group, or national life. Since they consisted of 50 to 70 per cent of the population, their views and values stood in marked contrast to that of committed

Muslims. Obviously in the nation as a whole, non-Islamic trends and thought patterns were able to make considerable headway among nominal Muslims and often these were unwittingly or deliberately contrary to what Muslim intellectuals regarded as important. This difference concerning extent of identification with Islam explains why the adage appeared that the "majority was treated like a minority". It also explains why the Muslim intellectuals often were ignored by the larger Indonesian nation, i.e., they were probably only representatives of a third of the Indonesian people, not the majority, as they would have liked to be.

FIRST PRINCIPLES

Undergirding the thinking of all the intellectuals discussed in the following chapters was a solid belief in the basic teachings and doctrines of Sunni Islam. Sunni indicates that it came through the major line of development in the Muslim community, as contrasted to the rival Shi'ah community and the many offshoot sects that have occurred in Muslim history. The base teachings of the Sunni community included a recognition of God as the great creator, who sent emissaries to humans with His message on how to live on earth and in the Hereafter. Muhammad (d. 632) in the sixth century was such a prophet — indeed he was the last of the prophets sent by God — who brought the complete message, called the Qur'an (Recitation), which laid out all of the information needed by humans. The Prophet Muhammad was important for the life he led as well, i.e., as an exemplar to humans on how God intended a human life to be conducted, so that his words and behaviour constituted a scripture subservient to the Qur'an. Those collected incidents were known as the Hadith (Traditions). God commanded that humans should live

in accordance with the *shari'ah* (sacred law), which was implicit in the Qur'an and Hadith. God also demanded that human action be centred on worship of Him and that all knowledge, all human action, and all human thought should strive towards synthesis with Him, a tenet known as *tawhid* (unity of God).

Sunni Muslims also held that the theology of Islam was set by Al-Ash'ari (d. 935) and al-Maturidi (d. 944), and that al-Ghazali (d. 1111) defined the proper relationship of religious sciences to one another. Efforts at forming a religious jurisprudence from the Qur'an, Hadith, and some ancillary considerations, were undertaken early in Islam as well, of which the Shafi'i school, observed in Southeast Asia, was one of them. Further, mystical practice was properly defined by al-Baghdadi (d. 1037). Historically the Sunni*s* recognized four patriarchs who ruled the Muslim community after Muhammad, and that the Umawi kingdom (630–750) and the 'Abbasid Empire (750–1258) were the legitimate political successors until the end of the golden age of Islam. Finally the tradition of all these doctrines and trends was correctly preserved by Islamic scholars, who further refined the standard understanding of what Islam entailed for the community of believers. All of the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals discussed in this study accepted these understandings about Sunni Islam and their thinking on all subjects was consistent with them or often, an extension of those understandings.

Finally, the time period of this study is defined as the twentieth century, i.e., 1901–2000. Obviously not all events fall neatly into such an arbitrary time-frame, but overall the historical trends do seem to fit without great difficulty. Comments about events before and after the twentieth century are occasionally made, but only to provide context to events in the twentieth century itself.

Chapter 2

Early Twentieth Century Development

It is important to understand the context of Islamic belief and practice in the area now known as Indonesia at the beginning of the twentieth century, in order to perceive the intellectual currents that occurred afterwards. At the time there were three major manifestations of Islamic religious activity. The first current was widely popular in society, crossing the spectrum of commitment to Islam between nominal and committed Muslims. It consisted of visitations to the tombs of holy men to ask for blessings and intercession, involved the use of charms and amulets to ward off evil, and promoted belief in good and bad spirits, which could be controlled by use of special prayers and incantations. The second current was concerned with mysticism, i.e., spiritual searching in which trances were attained through esoteric exercises, usually reciting the names of God or some pious phrase, such as the *zikir*. The esoteric exercises, particularly the *ratib,* in which several worshippers would sit close to one another and rock their bodies back and forth in unison while chanting the *zikir*, were frequently used in some sectors of society where they constituted a common form of participatory worship and/or entertainment. This current was strong in the committed community and among some nominal Muslim groups. The third

current was connected with the general themes of worship and behaviour as described in the Qur'an and interpreted by the legal scholars of Islam. The emphasis on formal worship was lightly used by the general population, but highly regarded by those trained to be scholars in Islam. In general, reform movements in Southeast Asian Islam attempted to diminish the impact of the first two trends and raise the importance of the third.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE HOLY WAR

In the first quarter of the twentieth century the territory known now as Indonesia was mostly under the direct or indirect control of the Netherlands and was called the Netherlands East Indies. It had been the policy of the Indies administration during the nineteenth century to bring all of the territories and ethnic groups in the archipelago under its control. That goal had been attained through diplomatic effort, economic activity, and military action. At the turn of the century the territory of Aceh was still being pacified. The Acehnese defence, led mostly by religious teachers and some local government leaders, identified strongly with Islam, which fortified popular desire to remain independent of any outside political power. Acehnese resistance utilized "irregular" warfare, in which Dutch patrols and outposts were attacked by small bands of roving marauders. Ultimately the Dutch were successful in removing most hostile resistance and winning the cooperation of the local territorial leaders, long-time rivals to the religious scholars for leadership in the general population.

The first example of Indonesian Islamic intellectual thought for the twentieth century arose from this struggle between the Dutch and the Acehnese. Oral communication was strong at this time and sagas, tales, and sermons were used to invigorate the

response against the Dutch. Sagas about the use of the *perang sabil* (holy war) in earlier times were especially popular, which were fortified by sermons by religious leaders proclaiming that action against the Dutch constituted a "just" war. There was also a report spread throughout the countryside that a vast uprising of Muslims throughout of the world against Europeans would occur that would be the salvation of the Acehnese. About the turn of the century several pamphlets were distributed, apparently as propaganda to reinvigorate those who were wavering in the struggle against the Dutch. Since literacy was low it is likely that the pamphlets were meant to be read by those who could read, who would then pass the message on orally to groups of supporters.

Acehnese religious clerics, like the ones who wrote the pamphlets, were mostly trained in-country by foreign Muslims, often Arabs from the Hadramaut or their descendants on the islands of the Indian Ocean or coastal India. These Arab scholars taught traditional Islamic sciences — jurisprudence, mysticism, Qur'anic Arabic, and philosophy. Some students, after studying under several travelling scholars, went on to Mecca for further study. Hence the thinking that evolved among such students was centred on standard doctrine and practice along with political and social concerns that affected the Arabic and Acehnese worlds. Probably none had any real understanding of Western learning and, in general, the West was viewed as an evil and treacherous place.

One of the pamphlets, written by the religious leader Teungku Kuta Karang (active 1900), asserted that the holy war should be the primary instrument of the Acehnese effort. Kuta Karang drew on historical example and Muslim doctrine when he stated that the use of holy war was justified by a foreign threat to Muslim people and their Islamic way of life. He asserted that

Muslim tradition was quite clear in the use of warfare in such instances, and he cited well-known religious scholars in Islamic history as supporting this contention. The pamphlet argued that the holy war was the highest duty a Muslim could have, taking precedence over all other obligations because the very existence of Islam was at stake. The author claimed that the rewards for participation were likewise higher than they would be for other religious obligations, that is, those dying in the effort would be martyrs and rewarded with paradise regardless of their sins.

In the tract Kuta Karang stated that the threat to Islam in Aceh was not imagined, but real. As an illustration he referred to nearby colonial cities of Southeast Asia, i.e., at Batavia, Penang, and Singapore, stating that Islamic teachings and lifestyle had been set aside for adoption of Western materialism and for rule without concern for godliness. The loss of direct Muslim rule and the replacement of Islamic values for materialism and hedonism were stark testimony to the European onslaught against Muslims and Islam. He left unstated, but understood to those who would read or listen to the tract, that Aceh was an Islamic society, with a ruler who had an Islamic title and whose laws and customs were shaped in significant part by Islamic values. Moreover Muslim religious scholars had a very influential role in society. He asserted that Islam was under attack and in very great danger. Accordingly, Kuta Karang concluded that the threat called for a grand sacrifice in which the Acehnese people and all of the wealth of the country would be mobilized to combat the Dutch at a level that would assure victory. Apparently he regarded earlier efforts at such mobilization as less than full commitment.

Kuta Karang's justification for the holy war was certainly not unique in the Islamic world, as it had been used elsewhere when Muslim political fortunes were under attack, and had been invoked several times by leaders of local uprisings in the

Indies. However, history was against the Acehnese effort on this occasion, although it was only in 1915, some fifteen years after the appearance of Kuta Karang's pamphlet, that the last guerrilla units either surrendered or became ineffective. Aceh became a part of the Dutch colonial holdings until 1942; it later was included in the territory transferred by the Dutch to the Indonesian state in 1950.

With the end of the Acehnese war the concept of holy war, fell into general disuse as an instrument for political action until the 1930s. As we shall see below, it reappeared as a recommended political tool, but in a much different context than the warfare between the Dutch and the Acehnese.

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

At the same time as the Dutch control was consolidated over the entire archipelago, there was a strong feeling in the Netherlands itself about the shortcomings of the colonial system. Many Dutch citizens felt that policy in the Indies during the nineteenth century had not been as humane towards the indigenous population as it should have been. There was a desire, especially among the ruling Catholic Party leadership, that amends should be made for those earlier instances of insensitiveness on the part of the Dutch. Consequently, in 1901 the Ethical Policy was initiated, which was intended to revise the policy of economic development of the Indies to include more benefits for the indigenous population, such as the creation of school systems, welfare projects, and upgrading the local economy.

The Ethical Policy (1901 to *circa* 1920), only in effect a comparatively short time, did have a long-lasting impact for the last half century of colonial operation in the Indies by making the

welfare of the local population a consideration for governmental action. But the issue was complicated by the action of several Dutch governors-general who attempted to stifle the efforts of indigenous activists to end colonial rule and establish an independent Indonesian state. All told the benefits were hardly commensurate with what had been originally intended by the Catholic Party leaders.

Briefly stated, the political scene in the first quarter of the twentieth century saw the rise of new thinking about the aspirations of the local population and their relationship with the Dutch. The inspiration for this thinking came from a wide number of sources, especially Europe and the Middle East. Nationalism and Marxism were imports from Europe and were given new interpretations fitting with the local environment during this time-frame. Marxism, in particular, gathered considerable support among some intellectual circles outside of Islam, and militancy in the name of communism was used by some union organizers, especially among transport workers. Nationalism was found among the newly-educated Indonesian elite, who mostly were products of Dutch schools, where they learned about nationalism in European countries. Nationalism was to be asserted more fully in the second quarter of the century.

The original Muslim political effort, however, seems to have been home-grown. Its leaders formed an organization called the Sarekat Islam (Islamic Association), which initially was a Muslim economic combine meant to promote Javan merchant interests to offset competition with Chinese traders active throughout the Southeast Asian region. The association modified quickly into an umbrella political organization as groups, factions, and individuals with a wide variety of ideologies and viewpoints saw advantage in seeking cooperation with one another. The use of Islam in the title did not discourage people from joining it who

were only nominal Muslims or had no relationship with Islam at all, but the core of the association remained grounded in the growing middle-class Muslims of the era.

Alongside this indigenous political development, there was a second Muslim movement fuelled by modernist Muslim thinking that came out of the Middle East, which was generally, but not specifically non-political. It provided the stimulus for a new group of Muslim intellectuals to formulate views of the role of Islam in society and the type of institutions needed to effect a transformation of the community to a new era.

THE APPEARANCE OF MODERNIST ISLAM AND REACTION TO IT

West Sumatra in the early twentieth century was a source for an important group of writers, artists, teachers, and intellectuals. The primary ethnic group, the Minangs, was organized about a matrilineal inheritance system, with men assigned general living space outside the family in dormitories. While there were close relationships between men and their natural families, they also had ample spare time to devote to outside activities. In many cases this was turned towards religion, education, and intellectual pursuits, although other interests existed as well. Some students travelled to Aceh for study and some to Mecca for the pilgrimage and further training before returning to teach throughout the Sumatra–Strait of Malacca region. Minang men gained a reputation for ability, competence, and Islamic piety.

Minang religious teachers were often concerned about upgrading Muslim behaviour and teaching to accord more fully with general Sunni Muslim practices found in the Middle East. After the work of several movements in the nineteenth century, the way was open for modernist Muslim thinking, which

attempted to establish the Qur'an and Traditions as the main sources of Islamic belief and practice. Consistent with the remarks on trends in Islam given above, all the reformers downplayed saint-worship and mystical practice for a form of Islam associated with standard worship and behaviour.

In particular, the modernist Muslim line of reasoning was developed in the Middle East by a number of thinkers, primarily Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905) and Muhammad Rashid Rida' (d. 1935), and spread throughout most of the Muslim world in the first half of the twentieth century. In the Middle East it was a response to Western gains in education, technology, and other fields. Its founders proclaimed knowledge, science, and technological advancement to be the property of all humankind, without regard for origin and urged Muslims to accept it in general. They also stated that the key sources of Islam, i.e., the Qur'an and Traditions of the Prophet, allowed such acceptance, and charged Muslims to become involved in their own advancement and development.

In particular the Southeast Asian modernists created a new religious literature in Malay, which began to challenge the near-monopoly of the Arabic language in previous religious writing. In addition modernist Islam stressed education which expanded study of the Islamic subjects taught previously — mostly study of Arabic language and jurisprudential texts — to include mathematics, science, and history. Finally, it called for the removal of certain long-held religious practices that had no clear authorization in the scriptures of Islam, such as the *talqin*, the burial recitation invoking the mercies of the two angels of death. Of course, these new concepts and attitudes were not accepted by large groups of other Muslims, opening the way for controversy, friction, and even animosity among Muslim educators. In this contest the modernists became known as the *kaum muda* (young

group) and the traditionalists were given the title of *kaum tua* (old group). The split was deep and long-lasting, enduring throughout most of the century, with differences still apparent in the early twenty-first century.

In Singapore and neighbouring Johore several of these Minang scholars, notably Tahir Jalal al-Din al-Azhari (d. 1957) and Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi (d. 1934), urged Malays to adapt to changing times by accepting new knowledge, modern methods of learning, and making rational thought an important tool in their decisions. This message struck hard at the use of animistic practices that the modernists believed stifled standard Islamic teachings and modernization, such as the use of amulets, spells, and charms. They complained that the local population was slothful in work habits and especially negligent of prescribed Islamic practice. Mostly they delivered harangues about shortcomings that were not much appreciated by the local Malay population or local religious functionaries, who, in turn, came to view the modernist Muslims as fanatics with bad manners. In 1906 the modernists founded the newspaper *Al-Imam* (The Leader), in Singapore, which served as a sounding board for the modernist message to a limited group of religious scholars and to the interested public throughout Southeast Asia that were sympathetic with them.

Shortly after the Singapore development, the debate gathered strength in west Sumatra as well, led by Haji Rasul (d. 1945), who launched a campaign to remove practices from worship that he held had not been mentioned in Islamic scriptures and, hence, were regarded by him as unwarranted change in worship. In particular he called for the Friday sermon to be given in local languages, because few worshippers in Southeast Asia understood the message in Arabic. He argued that prayer in general had necessarily to be recited in Arabic because the

Prophet Muhammad commanded that it be recited in precise form. On the other hand, the sermon was "advice", formulated by sermon-givers to guide worshippers and there were no religious sources that specifically commanded this part of the service to be in Arabic. The indigenous language was the logical choice, which fit with the modernist Muslim aim of explaining Islam in local languages.

In a second argument Haji Rasul urged drastic revision of mystical practice so that it no longer competed with regular worship activities and recognized standard prayer and worship as obligatory for all believers, including the mystics. Here he took issue with the long-held practice of mystical masters and their adepts who regarded their own esoteric exercises as a substitution for formal worship. Haji Rasul argued that there was no permission for this exception in the Qur'an or in the Traditions of the Prophet. He argued further that mystics should not use mysticism as an end in itself, but only as a device by which to supplement formal worship and to give guidance to their normal lives. There should be no retreat from the world, but an engagement with it, a viewpoint that was very much at odds with many mystic masters, who did, in fact, spend their lives away from normal occupations, duties, and pleasures.

In examining the origins of Islamic jurisprudence Haji Rasul judged the sources and the methodology of the early Muslim jurists to be correct, because they examined the Qur'an and Traditions of the Prophet and, along with "analogy" and "consensus of the scholars", laid out principles that were clearly reflective of Islamic ideals. However, he charged that later legal scholars had simply based their decisions on the findings of the earlier scholars while ignoring the first sources, i.e., Qur'an and Traditions. The first scholars were correct in their time, he reasoned, but later scholars were simply guilty of "blind

imitation" of the scholars preceding them, without real religious justification of their own from scripture. This attack by Haji Rasul on the legitimacy of legal scholars was unacceptable to the traditionalist scholars, who saw themselves part of that line of authority from the earliest scholars and believed that those scholars living closer to the time of the Prophet were more apt to be correct than those living further from that time. Accepting the line of scholarly authority was important to them.

The traditionalist scholars had much the same background as the modernists did, it was simply that they had not come under the influence of modernist Muslim teachers in Mecca, but had studied with those who accepted the long-standing legalist explanations of religion. Significantly some of these traditionalists held that some reforms were called for, such as improving the teaching of Arabic, and in including some general subject matter in their schools. But they would not give way on the issues concerning the essential correctness of the existing legal interpretations of Islam as the modernist Muslims insisted. In particular, they held that the teachings of the established scholars of Islam had carefully interpreted the scriptures of Islam and had formulated the teachings of Islam in a correct manner. They charged that it was folly and even blasphemy to question the authenticity of their work and the reference to their work by later scholars.

The modernist scholars communicated among themselves and with others of a like mind through their teaching, mosque organizations, and magazines. The most noted publication was *Al-Moenir* (The Light), which used much of the material published earlier in *Al-Manar* (The Beacon), published in the Middle East. The traditionalist elite employed a similar communication system. Two newspapers, The *Soeloeh Melayoe* (Malay Torch) and the *Soeara Melayoe* (Malay Voice), both issued in Padang,

took up the message of the traditionalists and responded to the arguments of the modernist press. Consequently west Sumatran society was split along lines of the argument. Mosques were sometimes identified with one side or the other, and often followers of one group were forbidden from worshipping in the mosques of the other group. Further, the groups were so hostile that they branded one another "apostates" and assigned the names of disgraced groups from the Muslim past to one another as further indications of their disapprobation. The later spread of modernism in the Indies emphasized the same teachings as the Minang modernists and elicited the same reaction and counter-arguments by traditionalist groups.

Significantly these competing groups of modernists and traditionalists avoided political matters in this time-frame and did not challenge existing political authority, which undoubtedly was an important tactic in gaining the tolerance of the Dutch administration. In general the Dutch were highly fearful at the time about the spread of "pan-Islamic" sentiment entering the region because of that ideology's strong anti-colonial stance, pointedly calling for united Muslim political action against European powers. The debate in the Indies between the modernists and the traditionalists concerning proper religious authority did not appear to Dutch officials as any sort of threat to their own interests. Nonetheless, they monitored Muslim developments carefully.

THE BEGINNING OF INDONESIAN POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Continuing the discussion of political development begun in an earlier section, the Sarekat Islam (Islamic Association) evolved into a political movement, with a manifesto calling for political

activity by local peoples in the Indies and a strengthening of Islamic institutions to reflect the primary religion of the inhabitants. The statements of indigenous leaders implied that a new political structure was needed in which local officials would ultimately replace Dutch authority and that, over time, public policy should be shifted to favour the local population instead of the Dutch imperial system. The movement included "Islam" in its title as a common point of identification which would transcend ethnic and regional loyalties, and it achieved its purpose admirably. It became a mass organization without regard for religion, ethnicity, or ideology, allowing those with Muslim, secularist, and communist agendas to work within a common framework in which the greater goal, usually left unsaid, was removing the Dutch from power.

Leadership for the new political movement came from Java, but the ethnic membership was more diverse. Javanese and Minangs were the two most prominent groups, with other groups from across the archipelago represented as well. In large part that leadership came from educated migrant groups drawn to the major cities of Java, where the chief economic, career, and cultural developments were occurring. Many in this grouping had Islamic educations, some had forms of special Javanese education, and a considerable number had been exposed to Western learning. The intellectuals associated with the new political activity were often activists and ideologues as well, as we shall see below. They were highly interested in political activism and much of their thinking was an attempt to rationalize the political stands they had already taken.

In this particular setting communication of intellectual ideas occurred mostly through political associations, since the new movement was organized by local chapters with overarching district and regional branches. Political communication flowed

throughout the associations, whether it was practical advice, ideological strengthening, or political justification. Cadres were important as communication links, who often used manifestos and instructions to pass on information to lay members. In particular, mass gatherings, sometimes up to a 100,000 people, mobilized members and supporters, and information and instructions important to the movement were imparted on those occasions. As well there were newspapers, newsletters, and magazines that further distributed the message. Since the Sarekat Islam was highly decentralized and badly organized, this was probably a rather inefficient communication system, but it did use several different media to spread its message.

Sarekat Islam policies centred mostly on economic issues, especially the threat of Chinese entrepreneurship to the Muslim middle class, and on the depressing effects of Dutch agricultural policy on the Javanese population. The Islamic goals of the association were vague, referring to improving the worship facilities of the population, and some members advocated working for the upgrading of the Muslim community in general. Intellectually the best statement of the era comes from a Bandung activist and journalist named Sabirin (d. *circa* 1954) at the end of the period. He lamented the state of affairs where a foreign colonial power (i.e., the Dutch), which was not Muslim, had control of the country and compelled Indonesian Muslims to live under a system which did not allow for religious considerations in public policy or in the formation of laws. He asserted that this situation was a primary cause for the poor state of economic, social, and cultural accomplishments by the Muslim population. He wanted Islam to be the catalyst to change this inferior, unsatisfactory condition. He regarded the Sarekat Islam as one instrument for achieving these goals, but saw other possibilities as well. For example, he advocated that Indonesian

officials working for the Dutch at the local and regional level exert their influence, take up the Islamic mission, and begin to rule using the principles of religion. Sabirin was convinced that such a development would have far-reaching effects and that the depressed situation of the Muslims would immediately begin to improve. Unfortunately for Sabirin and the Muslim cause, the Javanese officials to whom he was referring were under tight Dutch control, which precluded action to advance an Islamic cause. Moreover, those officials were culturally tuned to indigenous Javanese values that did not give high value to committed Islamic teachings, so Sabirin's suggestion had very little impact, but his fellow activists in the Sarekat Islam regarded it as a valid suggestion.

Surprisingly, given the unsettled conditions of the time and the amount of militancy that arose regarding nationalist goals, the Sarekat Islam remained a legal movement for some fifteen years before Dutch authorities curtailed its operations. Its long existence was due to the careful political balancing act of its principal leaders Umar Cokroaminoto (d. 1934), Abdul Muis (d. 1959), and, later Agus Salim (d. 1954). From the beginning this leadership was challenged by a militant faction led by Semaun (active 1919) and later Tan Malaka (d. 1949). By 1915 a split developed in the organization between the militants, who wanted confrontation with Dutch authorities to press nationalist demands, and the "moderates", who wanted to keep communication open with the Dutch and to use tactics short of direct confrontation. The association was badly fractionalized in 1926 when the militant faction called for strikes in the public sector. Dutch authorities responded by arresting most of the militant leaders and placed such restrictions on the association that made it politically ineffective, and, as a result, its membership evaporated.

In its heyday committed Muslims, nominal Muslims, and even some non-Muslims used the Sarekat Islam for the expression of their own political outlooks, with one group taking a strong Islamic tact and the other espousing a socialist outlook with little reference to God attached to it. Strikingly one religious scholar, Haji Misbach (d. 1926), known as the "red *haji* (pilgrim) of Solo", regarded the socialist message as vital for Muslims and sided with the communists in their efforts to directly confront colonial authority. Haji Misbach contended that the themes of egalitarianism and social justice raised by the communists were also found in the central teachings of Islam. He stated that Muslims were commanded by God to be compassionate to one another and that all believers had necessarily, as part of their religious obligations, to assist the less fortunate in society as an ordinary duty. Haji Misbach argued further that the communists had their own tactics on how to gain their ends, which differed from that generally used in Muslim history, but such tactics were a matter of achieving success, not a difference in the fundamental message. He was, of course, more than a thinker. He went so far as to involve himself in clandestine activities against the Dutch and was eventually arrested.

Haji Misbach and his followers were not really out of touch with the general views of the committed Muslim community of the time. Indeed, most of the Muslim leaders agreed that human society should be based on considerations of equality, economic prosperity, and goodwill, but they saw a fundamental difference with the communist approach to that goal. Arguments about social justice were put forward, first by Abdul Muis, and given later refinement by Umar Cokroaminoto. This Muslim intellectual response asserted that socialism was a manifestation of Islam, but that it had necessarily to be in conformity with the other teachings of Islam. It could not be associated with the secular and atheistic views common in Marxism, particularly with its

contemporary manifestation, Bolshevism, whose followers were then coming to power in Russia. Instead, the tithe, the poor tax, and other Islamic institutions were emphasized as the proper instruments for addressing the welfare needs of society. Muis and Cokroaminoto concluded that there was a great difference between communist and Muslim principles on the matter. They asserted that Haji Misbach's position was too accommodating to the communists, even though the affinity with socialism was affirmed.

In general then, during this first period of the twentieth century, up until about 1925 there were three significant intellectual justifications put forward by Muslims. The first dealt with the prosecution of the holy war as an instrument to defend the existence of an independent Muslim state from falling under the control of a non-Muslim and "aggressive" foreign power. The second dealt with Islamic modernism, which argued for reformed religious practice and the use of basic religious sources for interpretation of Islam in the lives of believers. It was opposed by traditionalist Muslims seeking to preserve established religious teachings and practice. The third trend dealt with an open political agenda and, strikingly, tried to give socialism an Islamic context, by arguing that Islam and socialism were related in struggling for social justice. Justifications for political action were an important part of the political debate with some Muslims convinced that the Dutch should be confronted and that the use of force was a legitimate tactic, while the mainstream Muslim community was of the conviction that dialogue and peaceful confrontation were the preferred means of achieving political goals. Mostly intellectual thought was "ideological", that is, it was developed out of the viewpoint of a particular group and the lines of thinking that were forthcoming attempted to justify the original viewpoint.

Chapter 3

The Flowering of Islamic Associations

A COLONIAL CULTURE AND ITS PROBLEMS

The second quarter of the century in the Indies was a period of general Dutch political repression towards indigenous nationalism and the creation of a colonial state given over to the benefit of an immigrant European population. Education became widespread, but it was education in which one's access was determined by status in the colonial system. For the Europeans and the Indonesian gentry an extensive and advanced school system was instituted, while the general population of the Indies was provided a short, very limited education designed to serve a traditional agricultural world. Politically, nationalism gained in popularity, in part due to the education of the Indonesian gentry, but by more popular forces as well. However, indigenous political organizations remained small and vulnerable, with their leaders targets of Dutch police services that viewed them as threats to public security. Many prominent nationalist leaders were sentenced to prison or sent into internal exile.

Late in the era efforts were undertaken to form coalitions of the many "nationalist" organizations that existed, which had some limited impact on the debates in the Volksraad (People's Assembly), the advisory council to the colonial administration.

On the Muslim scene a second wave of Muslim modernism occurred and it generated the founding of several Muslim organizations, while the traditionalist reaction created still more organizations to counter the influence of the modernists. It was a period of repression for Indonesian nationalist movements, but a golden age for the foundation of Muslim organizations.

MUSLIM MODERNISM SPREADS TO JAVA

The second wave of modernist Muslim activity took place on Java and involved several different ethnic groups — primarily the Javanese, the Sundanese, and the Arabs, although one Tamil immigrant was important as well. None of these groups was part of the new "Indonesian" culture that produced the leadership for the Sarekat Islam or for several other groups outside this study, such as the literary elite. In this particular group of modernists, most leaders had backgrounds of pious Muslim family life and training and that training often included study at Mecca. Consequently they were all well-versed in standard Sunni Islamic teachings, and modernist Muslim teachings were regarded as an amplification of that Muslim message. They also had some marginal contact with Western learning.

The communication of ideas among this grouping was largely through the written word. These leaders were convinced that the Islamic message had to be done in a new religious literature using the vernacular — usually Malay — and they issued studies, books, magazines, in which they put forward their new thinking. They also used public addresses, particularly the information sessions where the lessons of modernist Islam were imparted to the lay members of organizations, so that they could share in the doctrine as well as the practice of Islam at a more sophisticated level than had been true earlier. This was an argumentative Islam,

using public debate, both oral and written, as a standard means of communication. Such argumentation was highly effective in raising a following. Further, Muslim organizations issued magazines, newsletters, and other circulars to inform, energize, and mobilize their supporters. The message relied on a population literate in Malay, which was gaining usage in the urban centres of the Indies.

The second wave of Muslim modernism began around 1912 when Achmad Dachlan (d. 1923) at Yogyakarta downplayed the harsh arguments of the Minang modernists and stressed practical changes that fit with the Javanese environment. First, he modified the Muslim educational curriculum by placing general subjects taught in Western-style schools alongside standard Muslim subjects. This was soon to become general practice in modernist schools and in some traditionalist schools as well. Later, he opened clinics and midwifery centres using new medical practice; in the next era the trend was extended to hospitals and large medical centres. The organization that Dachlan founded, the Moehammadiyah (Association of Muhammad, the Messenger of God), remained small during the first ten years of its existence, but in the second quarter of the century captured the loyalty of middle-class Muslims and gained strength rapidly, reaching a membership of 24,000 in 1930 with over 4,000 pupils in fifty schools. It was an urban-centred movement and concentrated on the social needs of Muslims living in cities by using new institutions, such as polyclinics, libraries, and "information sessions".

Achmad Dachlan was an activist and his few attempts to place ideological matters in a theoretical framework stressed the necessity of human action. In a speech comparatively late in his career he stressed that religion was a lasting need for humans and that the standard principles of the religion

should be carefully and fully applied in human life. He regarded dedication to religion to be the mark of the good believer. To him good works without clear Muslim commitment was futile, as the effort did not honour God or show that good deeds flowed from a dedicated life. Alongside this concentration on religious piety it was necessary as well to always seek new knowledge and particularly never to refuse the knowledge available to others. This was an implied reference to the knowledge of the time developed in the West. Muslims, he implied, had a need to be masters of all knowledge, and this could best be accomplished in the modern world by taking what was useful from sources outside of Islam. He stated, however, as is always the case, knowledge and even intellectual activity had to be undertaken within the Islamic framework of "commanded", "laudatory", "neutral", "blameworthy", and "prohibited" so that application of new ideas would enhance the lives of believers rather than subtract from them. Accepting the conclusions of Western civilization or its lifestyle was undesirable. Lastly, Dachlan argued, knowledge should be applied properly so that best results were attained; a view that obviously fit with standard religious understanding and with common sense. Dachlan's intellectual message was clearly a case for an Islam that remained true to a historical piety, but recognized the need for acceptance of certain twentieth-century knowledge and technical ability. It was also fairly simplistic, but fitting with the new times when the social environment was changing.

In the same time-frame Ahmad Surkati (d. 1943), a Sudanese Arab resident in Batavia, worked within the Arab community to reform education there, also introducing general subject matter and revised ways of presenting classical Muslim teaching subjects. Much of his intellectual effort centred on a debate dealing with the status and prerogatives of the "noble" Arabs, i.e., those

claiming descent from the Prophet. They saw themselves as an elite within Islam and found no inconsistencies with being afforded deference by the larger Muslim community. In particular the kissing of their hands by other Muslims as a sign of respect was a centre point of the argument. Surkati, without a "noble" claim, felt strongly that the use of the title *sayyid,* used by those with descent from Muhammad, should have no particular advantage or status within the Islamic community, where, he argued, all believers were equal before God. In this argument he was supported by most of the modernist Muslim community and by the Indonesian nationalist movement, both of which were dedicated to populist attitudes.

Ahmad Surkati wrote two other important books which were intended to promote modernist Muslim principles of instruction and religious thinking. In them he outlined the basic forms of worship for a community whose members he regarded as generally lax in their observance. The content of these writings reflected quite closely the earlier work of Haji Rasul and the modernists in west Sumatra.

The modernist Muslim trend was further defined in a Sundanese context in the mid-1920s under the direction of Ahmad Hassan (d. 1957), a committed Muslim of Tamil ancestry, born and educated in a Muslim family in Singapore. He established a printing press and gave guidance to a group of ideologues at Bandung called the Persatoean Islam (Persis; or Islamic Union). From 1926 until 1941 this small group examined all the issues of modernism and engaged in public debate with spokesmen of groups with different viewpoints. Persis also issued tracts, books, and magazines that spelled out the interpretations that its members believed should be followed in regard to all sorts of Islamic matters then under public discussion, from matters of worship, to social concerns, to politics.

A. Hassan laid great stress on law, in theory and practice. Importantly he started with the scientific discoveries of contemporary times and asserted that "natural laws" regulated a created universe. He regarded God as the creator of all things and especially of law which He used to control nature and general creation. God's regulation and guidance of human beings was simply an extension of that natural law. Hassan regarded religious teachings as simple manifestations of God's laws and argued that the first obligation of humans was to accept and obey such regulatory teachings. This effort led him to issue a large number of "religious opinions" based on religious sources for undertaking proper worship and following the principles of Islam in daily life. Muslims from all over Southeast Asia wrote letters to him asking for his interpretation of Qur'anic verses, proper procedure in worship, and appropriate response to social situations. Over time his "opinions", originally published in the magazines *Pembela Islam* (Defender of Islam) and the *Al-Lisaan* (The Tongue), became numerous enough that they were issued as separate volumes and his followers created a minor Muslim school of law from them, which was a very unusual development.

In another area A. Hassan castigated Indonesians who followed the nationalist cause without associating with the Islamic interpretation of nationalism, as a wide number of political activists did. In an essay on nationalism he stated it was a Muslim's obligation, based on his interpretation of several verses in the Qur'an, to avoid "narrow, partisan allegiances", which he equated with nationalism, and to seek alliances with the broad community of Islam. He took special offence at the use of flags, anthems, and statues to heroes as elevating nationalism to such a high standard that it competed with the Muslim's respect for God. Hence, the use of such nationalist symbols was to him evidence of polytheism, that is, putting other things on

a level with God. Of all Indonesian reformers he was the most strident and uncompromising, frequently assigning nasty labels to his opponents, calling into question their very belief in Islam. In this stance he probably moved beyond the modernist Muslim designation and took on neofundamentalist characteristics as they came to be defined in the same era by the Egyptian ideologue Hasan al-Banna' (d. 1949) and his South Asian counterpart Sayyid Abu al- A'la Mawdudi (d. 1974).

THE TRADITIONALIST RESPONSE TO ISLAMIC MODERNISM

The reaction to the new wave of modernist Islam came in the founding of several "traditionalist" associations, of which the Nadhlatoel 'Oelama (Renaissance of Muslim Scholars) association, under the leadership of Muhammad Hasyim Ash'ari (d. 1947), was the most noted. The members of this traditionalist group were predominantly Javanese, and they had been trained in traditional Islamic boarding schools of the region, with many of them studying in Mecca at the conclusion of their studies. They had little contact with Western learning and they were generally opposed to Western ways, preferring instead to promote Arabic customs, clothing styles, and religious beliefs. There was close interaction and association among the owner-operator-teachers of those schools, which formed a closed social network. Primary communication was in the classroom and in the communication among the members of the network, so it was a limited audience, but a very influential one. The new association placed a further layer of coordination on the teaching network by allowing cadre, often carefully selected students in the various schools, to distribute instructions and information, and newsletters became a means of sharing information as well. Mostly the association

was rural in its orientation, so the creation of a mass, literate following was not developed. Older communication styles, particularly as imparted through long-held teaching methods continued to be the major means of passing on knowledge and insight.

M. H. Ash'ari and his colleagues were not given to intellectual argumentation, even as Achmad Dachlan was not, so their writings simply emphasized the necessity for all Muslim teachings to be in accord with the great past scholars of Islam. Those scholars, mentioned earlier, were al-Ash'ari in theology and basic religious beliefs, al-Ghazali (d. 1111) in mysticism and general Muslim practice, and al-Shafi'i (d. 820) in jurisprudence. M. H. Ash'ari certainly held to the importance of the lineage of scholars for interpretation of religious teachings, but he was also concerned about the unity of the Muslim community in Indonesia. On several occasions he called for traditionalists and modernist Muslims to engage in civil discourse and for each side to be kind to one another, so that both sides could concentrate on matters of common concern. He spelled out those commonalities as opposing fornication, usury, and drinking alcohol, as well as countering those people who slandered the Qur'an and the attributes of God, taught harmful knowledge, and questioned the Islamic faith. Truly, he claimed, both modernists and traditionalists could accept such an agenda. His effort at assisting unity of purpose among Muslims had limited impact, however, largely because modernist Muslims were convinced that the call for civility was a ruse to stop criticism of practices in religion that they opposed and could not allow to go unchallenged.

One activist, Machfoed Shiddieq (active 1926), in public debate with activists from the Persatoean Islam, expounded further on the traditionalist message. He claimed that traditionalist scholars were the proper guardians of the Islamic message, not

the modernist factions. In his argumentation Shiddieq held that practices in Islam found unsuitable by modernists, such as adding an "unspoken intention" to God in regular prayer, or to add extra prayers during the fasting month, were legitimately part of established Islamic practice. He asserted that those matters had been deemed acceptable by past Islamic scholars who saw them as "recommended" or "supererogatory" actions intended to enhance worship, certainly not detract from it. Mostly, however, he laid stress on the clear tradition of Islamic law through a long list of Shafi'ite scholars whom, he claimed, had upheld the legitimate message of Islam. He regarded modernist Muslim claims as undermining the scholarly tradition in Islam, which was a historical lifeline, and, certainly, in no way detrimental as the modernists claimed. As Shiddieq's views show, Nahdlatoel 'Oelama leaders and scholars did not do much real debating on points raised against them, but merely asserted the correctness of their position.

THE APPEARANCE AND GROWTH OF INDONESIAN NATIONALISM

Another facet of Indonesian identity took shape in this time-frame with the development of several nationalist parties, particularly the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI; or Indonesian Nationalist Party). Nationalist leaders of this era were mostly educated in the Dutch education system, with a large number going to the professional schools in the Indies or to universities in the Netherlands. This new elite was largely from Java or west Sumatra, where strong academic traditions that made it natural for them to move into the new arena of learning. They used Dutch as an intellectual language, although most were conversant in Malay and many in Javanese; increasingly over time they

used the new national language, Malay written in the Roman script. They preferred secularism, Western-dress styles, and other values taken from the West, and they turned their backs on local customs they regarded as backward. Sukarno (d. 1967), Soetomo (d. 1938), and Moehammad Hatta (d. 1980) were among the prominent leaders of this group. Their communication was through speeches, manifestos and, particularly, newspapers, where they could manipulate the written word. Sometimes they engaged in debates with their opponents, often using repartee to make incidental political statements against the Dutch authorities.

Nationalist leaders called for an independent nation-state, referred to as "Indonesia", to be formed from the territories of the archipelago. The "nationalist" call was intended to supercede the "smaller" nationalisms of Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi, and other places, and it was pointedly non-religious so that members of all religions could be part of the nationalist drive. Christians and some Hindu-Balinese were attracted to the movement as a result. The primary leader, Sukarno, attempted to fashion a new ideology not hitherto recognized. One of his early attempts was Marhaenisme, a slogan derived from the name of an agricultural worker Sukarno had once met, who called for a type of populism that Sukarno found intriguing. A second concept was the "harmony" of diverse factions that Sukarno found in archipelagic society, notably an Islamic identity, a socialist or communist inclination, and a nationalist commitment. He maintained that the three diverse trends needed common denominators which he hoped to be able to provide through his own charismatic personality.

Specific to Islam, Sukarno engaged in a correspondence, known as "the Islamic letters from Endeh", with A. Hassan of the Persatoean Islam. In the correspondence Sukarno reacted to

Hassan's assertions on the importance of Islam in society and aligned himself with the actions of Mustapha Kemal Ataturk (d. 1938) in Turkey and Reza Shah Pahlevi (d. 1944) in Iran. Those rulers attempted to limit the influence of religious teachers in public policy and curtailed religious activities regarded as out-of-step with modern times. In particular, economic development was to be stressed, European governmental forms were to be used, European law codes were to be adopted, and women were to be given higher status in society than was normal in Islamic societies. Sukarno's views on Islam were regarded as important at the time and assumed even greater importance later in history, a story to be taken up later in this study.

Another nationalist leader and literary figure, Muhammad Yamin (d. 1964), provided the historical backdrop for the new Indonesian nationalism by evoking the classical Javanese empire of Majapahit (1294 to 1478) as the prototype for the new Indonesian nation. He aroused the animosity of Muslims of the period by describing the historical period of Islamic states in Southeast Asia (*circa* 1200 to 1800), which followed Majapahit, as a low point in national development because of the failure of those states to provide unity in the face of colonial conquest. Sukarno has been labelled as a "Muslim" thinker by Indonesian Muslim groups, while M. Yamin has generally been considered outside the Muslim community.

WESTERN-EDUCATED GROUPS AND ISLAM

Still another line of thought centred about the intellectual work of Agus Salim. In addition to his leadership role in the Sarekat Islam, mentioned above, he was also a writer and an editor for several Malay- and Javanese-language newspapers. His editorial columns, in particular, challenged the Dutch, the communists,

the nationalists and anyone else whose views he felt stood in the way of developing a strong, progressive Muslim community in an independent Indonesian state. Above all, his arguments centred on the exploitation of Southeast Asians by the colonial system, charging the Dutch with operating political, economic, and social systems that were at odds with their own "liberal" national philosophy in the Netherlands. His arguments charged that double standards were in use by the Dutch government, but especially by Dutch authorities in the Netherlands Indies. He stated that the Dutch standard for the Europeans living in the Indies was tolerant and uplifting, but the other standard for the indigenous population was exploitive and unconcerned with their rights and dignity.

In one editorial Salim criticized the Dutch system of education in the Indies as unduly elitist. As explained earlier, the system established vernacular-language schools, with limited offerings for the broad masses, while children of the local elite were sent to European-style schools, using the Dutch language as the teaching medium. The upper-class education had a broad array of courses, covering basic, secondary and even advanced education, on the basis that after training the elite students would be called on to fill high administrative positions and serve the Dutch state as secondary rulers over the general population. Salim pronounced this as wrong-headed and deliberately divisive. He cited, in particular the caste system, which such a dual system promoted, and warned that a serious rift would be created between the two indigenous groups as a result. He argued as well that upper-class education would lead to alienation of the elite from their cultural roots in general society and especially from the Islamic religion.

Salim was, himself, a product of elite education, after which he had worked in Arabia as an administrative officer for the

Dutch in regulating and assisting pilgrims from the Indies. He developed a hybrid approach to Islam, understanding its basic principles and explaining them in writings that took advantage of Western cultural constructs. He wrote several important books, in Dutch, explaining Islam to Indonesians educated in the Dutch system and, incidentally to Westerners as well. More to the point, however, he became a "counsellor" to the Jong-Islamieten Bond (JIB; or Young Muslims' League), an association of committed Muslim students in Dutch-style schools on Java, who felt cultural alienation because of that education. Consequently they sought greater identification with their own society through discussion and writing about Indonesian subjects, often of a religious nature. Salim gave the group in Batavia special attention by providing them lectures on Islam, derived in large part from Western scholars, even while stressing the truth and value of the original Islamic message. The association published an intellectual magazine *Het Licht* (The Light), which contained the writings of its members and interested outsiders, mostly in Dutch.

One of the later leaders of Jong-Islamieten Bond was Moehammad Natsir (d. 1993), who also published several of his early writings in Dutch before he switched over to Malay-language writing. He was from west Sumatra and had moved to Java to take part in the new "Indonesian" society developing there. He attended Dutch-style schools, but also served as an advanced student at the Persatoen Islam school in Bandung. His most prominent thinking appeared in a response to the nationalist ideologues Sukarno and Soetomo. They repeatedly stated that the religiosity of the Muslim nationalists was too centred on worship, the pilgrimage, and other requirements of religion and not enough on building a "modern" society. They also judged the Islamic sultanate as woefully out of date and charged that the pilgrimage to Mecca was a total waste of money that was simply

given to the Arabs and to Dutch shipping companies; that money could be better invested in the future of the Muslim population, particularly in the building of schools.

Natsir responded to this attack on piety and waste by asserting that institutions built by the Dutch or the introduction of Western education were not the important factors in assuring that Muslims would be progressive. Rather, he argued, governments were only as good as the worth of the people leading them, whether they were sultanates or republics. Piety was important because "good" rulers and "good" government would be properly guided by God, so that society would be removed from wickedness and its members would be aware of what was correct, beneficial, and proper. Simply changing government to another form that appeared more efficient had little purpose in itself unless the people operating it were properly in touch with God. He stated further that imitating the Dutch and adopting Dutch institutions as the nationalists suggested was not in line with good Muslim practice.

As to the specifics of the pilgrimage and the charges that funds were being lost as a result, Natsir argued that just the opposite was happening. Muslims who went on the pilgrimage returned as community leaders, since they had undergone an inspiring rite that fortified their understandings of religion and the place of that religion in their societies. Such pilgrims were able to mobilize others to work for good causes in their societies, including the effort to gain independence. Hence the funds that were expended on the pilgrimage could be regarded as an investment in cadre development rather than as a loss to society. It would be better, concluded Natsir, if the Muslims themselves would establish their own pilgrimage transportation systems so that they, rather than the Dutch, would recoup some of the cost of the pilgrimage. Natsir was to become a prominent

political leader in the next era and one of its leading Muslim intellectuals.

STRENGTHENING THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

The Sarekat Islam, prominent in the first quarter of the century, continued to exist and became much more "Islamic" in its orientation, but lacked general influence after the 1926 arrests of its leftist activists. Its leaders at this time had been second-echelon leaders earlier and had succeeded to their positions as the older leaders had passed from the political scene. Most had been educated in Islamic schools, sometimes receiving some general education subject matter, but had not been much exposed to Western learning. Communication was through the use of a cadre which worked with smaller units of the association, so that speeches, newsletters and manifestos were common tools of propaganda. Since membership was much smaller than earlier, mass meetings were not much used as a mobilization tool.

In the mid-1930s the association again became the arena for a new round of thinking regarding the relationship of Islam with political endeavour. The association leader, Abikusno Cokrosujoso (d. *circa* 1960), put forward the concept known as *hijrah* (withdrawal). This strategy was presented as in keeping with the historical actions of the Prophet Muhammad in leaving the political cauldron of Mecca after the first phase of his ministry, where things were not going right for the early Muslim community, and by drawing apart to Medina, where the community refurbished its identity and strengthened itself. Afterwards the community was able to prevail over its enemies in Mecca because it was stronger than previously and its mission was clear in the minds of its leaders and general membership. As a parallel to that early Muslim experience, Abikusno advocated

abandoning the Sarekat Islam's long-held tactic of "cooperation" with the Dutch for this policy of withdrawal and internal strengthening. He did not regard this action as confrontation with the Dutch, but as somewhere between cooperation and confrontation.

The withdrawal strategy was given ideological expression by a secondary leader named Mardijan Kartosuwirjo (d. 1962), who reasserted the earlier political arguments that established Islam as a carrier of a socialist message in human affairs. To this he added the necessity for any new Indonesian nation to be closely identified with Islam and with policies and institutions that furthered Islam. So far as the withdrawal policy was concerned, Kartosuwirjo asserted that *jihad* (crusade) was called for, but defined that term as consisting of two different aspects. The small *jihad* was the application of force towards the enemy that threatened the Islamic community, while the great *jihad* involved a focus on the preparation of the community to assert itself as an instrument of God's will. The retreat from political action that the withdrawal policy implied was related to the great *jihad* and was intended to prepare the Indonesian Muslims for their effort later, whatever that might be. Kartosuwirjo attempted to actualize his thinking by establishing an institute for training propagandists in the new ideology. In the training sessions he emphasized the concepts of the Darul Islam (House of Islam), and the Darul Harb (House of War), a common reference used by historical Muslim writers from the early age of the religion. In this dualistic view of humankind the "house of Islam" was destined to triumph over Islam's enemies in the "house of war". The training had practical value as the trainees became cadres for Kartosuwirjo's efforts to establish an Islamic state in the late 1940s and early 1950s. That will be discussed further in the next chapter.

This period of time from 1925 to 1942 was intellectually fertile for Indonesian Muslims, with a considerable array of perceptions, notions and justifications put forward by committed Muslims. Mostly, however, they were responding to political and social conditions determined by the Dutch colonial system which controlled the Indies. Much of the thinking involved identification of a Muslim perspective in a changing world and then defending that position against other lines of thinking and ideology. There was certainly development of Muslim thinking during this era, but it was highly reactive to the views of others and seldom set the stage for future action or for future goals, except in very general terms. This is true whether one considers the socialist approach of Haji Misbach, the accommodationist outlook of Agus Salim, or even the isolationist approach of Kartosuwirjo.

Chapter 4

The Islamic Context in the Age of Sukarno

THE JAKARTA CHARTER

During the Japanese occupation of Indonesia (1942 to 1945) little occurred in the way of Indonesian Muslim intellectual development; the effort to survive in a food-short and severely authoritarian society apparently dampened abstract thought. Indonesian political leaders, however, did continue their efforts at achieving independence, and in 1945 the Japanese authorities allowed them to plan for that eventuality. At the ensuing preparatory conference, delegates met to draft a constitution and other documents necessary for such action, with the blessing of the Japanese administration. The delegates were drawn from wide ethnic, regional, religious, and social groupings. The dominant group consisted of the Dutch-educated elite that had been in exile or prison during the Dutch era, but had been used by the Japanese to mobilize the Javanese population through a series of organizations with quasi-governmental authority. They overwhelmingly favoured a state which would be based on secularism and nationalism, but specifically not Islamic.

The Muslim grouping represented associations in good standing with the Japanese or individuals with considerable personal standing of their own. These Muslim leaders had been

to Islamic schools in their formative years and had been in Muslim nationalist organizations throughout most of their lives. They favoured Islam as the guiding principle for the state and its operation. Consequently nationalist and Muslim outlooks were strikingly different, as they had been before the Japanese arrived. As well, both nationalist and Muslims leaders had their own group networks that allowed communication among members, and they were largely separate from one another and from the networks of still other groups, such as the Christians and Balinese. In the limited time available to the delegates, however, they had little communication with the larger population or with the organizations that the leadership groups represented.

A subcommittee charged with drafting a preamble to the constitution discussed and accepted a proposal from the Muslim group that came to be known as the "Jakarta Charter". That document declared Indonesia independent with a new state in which five key principles were fundamental. They included a belief in God and called for Islamic law to be applied to all Muslims living in the new state. The full committee favoured the declaration of independence and the five principles, but removed the section calling for the application of Muslim law, largely as a result of negotiations with non-Muslim delegates, who did not want references to any specific religion. However, the list of five principles formulated by Sukarno, which included a "Belief in God the Only One", was regarded as acceptable because it was a reference to an Almighty that most people in Indonesia could accept. The "five principles" were given the Sanskrit term of *Pancasila* and was regarded as a national slogan.

Activist Muslim leaders at the meetings were disappointed by the failure to accept the recommendation of the subcommittee, regarding it as reneging on an agreement. Still, they accepted the statements of prominent nationalist leaders that all the decisions

of the preparatory committee were temporary and that after independence an elected constituent assembly would reconsider all such issues. It took over a decade before that body met, while the issue itself remained a point of contention among political groups throughout the remainder of the century.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE DARUL ISLAM

On the whole, committed Muslims accepted the declaration of independence in 1945 and identified with the Republic of Indonesia that finally consolidated its hold over the Indonesian area by 1950. Hence the new Republic of Indonesia was accepted as a symbol of liberation from foreign occupation, but regional personalities and ethnic groupings sought local political standing of their own. The Dutch, for example, tried to create a number of regional states, many of which they dominated politically and economically to decrease the importance and territorial holdings of the Republic of Indonesia. The republic proved a successful enterprise, but it took nearly five years and enormous effort before it gained control over all the territory that was to become Indonesia.

During this era several of the regions used religion as one of the justifications for remaining independent of Republican control, citing in particular the refusal of the constitutional committee to identify Islam and the state with one another. Leaders of the regional movements put forward justifications and rationalizations as to why association with other "Indonesian" people was unwise. These were usually issued in manifestos and, while they were worded in intellectual argumentation, they did not really extend beyond simple political justification for actions taken. In Aceh, for example, leaders there distanced themselves from the Republic by claiming that the new state was simply a

new version of Javanese culture and a means to extend Hindu and Buddhist values throughout the region. They regarded such machinations an affront to all Muslims in Southeast Asia. Moreover, they argued, the attempt to guarantee freedom for all faiths unduly limited the Muslims, whose religion demanded that they implement Islamic laws in the administration of the state. As the religion of the overwhelming majority of the population, it was unjust to refuse to recognize the importance of such Islamic priorities. Finally, Acehnese leaders argued, it was apparent that the nationalist leaders in Jakarta had no real intention of ever changing the relationship of Islam and the state in the Republic of Indonesia; accordingly Muslims, such as the Acehnese, were free to assert their own political identity and create alternative states that did recognize Islam.

Groups in south Sulawesi and southern Kalimantan issued similar justifications for their refusal to become part of the Republic of Indonesia. Since ethnic and economic considerations were such a part of local identity, it is difficult to know whether Islam was the primary principle or simply was chosen as a justification for other complaints. Republic of Indonesia spokesmen of the time and most scholars on the history of the period later held that religion was not the motivating factor, but rather a justification for other reasons.

In 1947 a group in west Java called the Darul Islam (Land of Islam) under M. Kartosuwirjo, discussed above, declared an Islamic state to exist in Indonesia and claimed leadership of that effort. Subsequently it "incorporated" the Acehnese, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi regionalist movements into its effort, although the unification was merely announced, never effected. The argumentation of the case was not essentially different from Kartosuwirjo's earlier stand in the late colonial period stating that any Indonesian state that came into existence had, necessarily,

to reflect the aspirations of Muslims. Statements from leaders of the movement seldom spoke in intellectual terms about the Islamic nature of the political system which they espoused, although a manifesto was issued that spoke about the aspirations of the movement. However, the manifesto was cast in terms of foretelling events, rather than listing political aims or providing an intellectual justification. That manifesto prophesied that Indonesia would not become an Islamic state until a Third World War had occurred, in which Indonesian independence would finally be recognized and the Muslim faction would be its ultimate rulers. By the early 1960s all of these "Islamic" movements had all been pacified and their supporters silenced. In their time, however, they caused a great deal of discussion among Muslims in areas controlled by the Republic of Indonesia, who were sympathetic, but not completely convinced of the worth of the dissidents' tactics. In general most committed Muslims gave strong support to the Republic of Indonesia in its formative years, as did most other groups in society.

TRENDS IN THE SUKARNO ERA

The first political era in independent Indonesia centred on the time Sukarno held the presidency and consisted of three shorter time periods: the Revolution between 1945 and 1949, the period of Liberal Democracy between 1950 and 1957, and the period of Guided Democracy between 1957 and 1966. The first two sub-periods blended together to some degree since parliamentary democracy was in place, and the nationalist leader Sukarno functioned as a president with limited powers. In the last period he was a ruler operating an autocratic state. However, from a study of Muslim intellectual trends the central theme of an Indonesian national identity was important. Like other

intellectuals in Indonesia, Muslim thinkers concentrated on that topic, attempting to make a synthesis between emerging national slogans and the perceived standards of religious tradition. At the same time there was another important line of thought that dealt with the Islamic community itself and how it was to develop its own institutions, particularly that of Islamic law and its manifestations.

ISLAMIC STATE VERSUS PANCASILA

The central event in the Liberal Democracy period was the first national elections in 1955. In that election representatives were chosen for the national parliament and another set was chosen for the constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. The constituent assembly had to resolve great issues of national importance, such as the degree of centralization of the republic, the economic relationships of the regions, the type and powers of different government institutions, and the role of religion in the state. The final issue always had the attention of the Muslims and their statements about it energized the election campaign. Muslims in general were united on the official recognition of Islam in the state and the application of Islamic law, but they differed as to what constituted Islamic law. On one side the traditionalist Muslims wanted the application of the Shafi'i jurisprudential code as it had been used in parts of the Middle East for nearly 1,000 years. On the other side were a number of modernist Muslim proposals for new derivations of law which would draw on Islamic sources but reflect modernist principles.

During the campaign leading up to the 1955 elections there was considerable debate as to whether Pancasila should continue to serve as a philosophic statement of Indonesian nationhood as President Sukarno and his nationalist followers argued, or

whether Indonesia should formally become an Islamic state as many committed Muslims desired. The issue became an important matter of division within society and was carried into the debates of the constituent assembly. There many different Muslim viewpoints were expressed, although the Muslim delegates all agreed that Islam should in some manner be made manifest in the national life of the nation and that there should be a clear statement about it in the new constitution. Two leading speeches, by Moehammad Natsir and by M. Isa Anshary (d. 1969), laid out the leading cases for how Islam could be integrated into state action. We have already identified M. Natsir as a youth leader from the preceding era, but by this time he had been prime minister for a short period of time and general secretary of the Masjumi political party for nearly a decade. On the other hand, M. Isa Anshary, also a Minang, had come to Bandung to study at the Persatuan Islam and had become a leading ideologue of that association. Both were well prepared and drew on their earlier articles, speeches, books, and manifestos. In the perception of the general population Natsir was regarded as a national politician with some standing and respect, while M. Isa Anshary was regarded as an advocate for a narrow Muslim position.

Mohammad Natsir made a case for Indonesia developing itself as a Muslim society through Islamic awareness and transformation, while instituting Islam as the state religion to establish a principle to motivate all Indonesians. Natsir stated that Islam was not to be seen in the narrow sense of rules and laws established by earlier scholars, but as a set of principles that could be adapted to time and place through human reason. On one level this statement was an affirmation of modernist Muslim principles and a repudiation of the traditionalist Muslim position. But the speech was also reflective of Muslim intellectual positions made in the late colonial era regarding the importance of general

human well-being and the need for a Muslim government to be concerned about building a society in which the affluent and the needy both had a place and where the state assisted them. Accordingly he specifically spoke to economics, stating that wealth should not be unduly concentrated in a small group, but should be used as an engine to provide for the well being of the entire populace. Consequently Natsir rejected capitalism, because of its self-proclaimed policies of "selfishness". He also condemned communism and even socialism as doctrines that, while recognizing communal interests, were not inculcated with Islamic principles so that the moral tone and piousness of the population would be properly served. In this sense he continued the themes set earlier in the century by the members of the Sarekat Islam, but, of course, gave it a modern context by recognizing the imperatives of building governmental institutions to undertake economic development, which was a theme of the international community of nations at the time.

M. Isa Anshary was less concerned than M. Natsir about the functioning of the Indonesian state, and much more centred on promoting the role of Islam in state and society, reflecting a neofundamentalist view prominent in the Persatuan Islam. Convinced that Indonesian society should reflect Islamic characteristics because most of its people were Muslims, he argued for the adoption of the original Jakarta Charter as the proper national statement. He saw Pancasila as simply a national rallying point without substantive meaning, whereas the clear statements to God and God's law in the Jakarta Charter were references to the standards of Islam, which would give the state moral substance and a mission consistent with Islamic principles. He argued that by recognizing Islam, the statements in Pancasila took on clear meaning that they did not otherwise have. Still the *shari'ah* was at the core of Anshary's thought. He regarded

that sacred law as offering a far more fitting choice than human-derived law that was then emerging from the new Indonesian legislature. He did not go deeply into his conceptions of Muslim law in his speech, but wanted new canons developed fitting with modernist Muslim principles. He regarded the religious opinions of A. Hassan, cited earlier, as an appropriate starting point for such legal construction. Obviously the presentations of Natsir and Isa Anshary differed substantially, but they both called for adoption of Islamic values, which did not happen in the final analysis.

AN INDONESIAN MUSLIM SCHOOL OF JURISPRUDENCE

The second intellectual issue during the era of Liberal Democracy dealt with the formation of Islamic law that related directly to the area of Indonesia. Basic conceptualization was done by two scholars — Hazairin (d. 1975) and T. M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy (d. 1975). Hazairin was devoted to the study of customary law, and Hasbi concentrated on the Traditions of the Prophet as a source for Muslim law. They came from different backgrounds, with Hazairin from Java, a product of Dutch-style education, and a subsequent career in the civil service. Hasbi was a religious scholar from Aceh, who spent his career in Muslim higher education in Aceh and at Yogyakarta in Java. Starting at different points, both came to the conclusion that Indonesian religious law needed new thinking and could not simply be implementation of jurisprudential thinking from the Middle East. In particular these two thinkers held that Islamic law — and here they were alluding to *fiqh*, the canons of the standard Islamic law schools — had been in the process of development since the eighth century, with the culture of the Arabs and other peoples of the

Middle East in mind. When that law was applied in Indonesia, it often did not fit the local context.

Both Hazairin and Hasbi believed that a new "canon" should be developed, which would draw on the standard sources of Islamic law and that trained Indonesian Muslim scholars should do the work. This new "Indonesian school" would take its place alongside the existing recognized law schools of Islam, i.e., Shafi'i, Maliki, Hanafi and Hanbali.

Hazairin, the customary law specialist, was particularly concerned about building a law that would accommodate the different regional customs of Indonesia, from the matrilineal system of the Minangs, to the bilateral inheritance systems of Java. However, his suggestions about the scope and direction of the new law code were very general and never reached the point of actual compilation, or even the distillation of basic principles. For his part, Hasbi translated several thousand Traditions of the Prophet into the Indonesian language to provide the material for legal scholars to compile the new code. His translation work was completed by the time of his death, but the actual work on a new Indonesian "canon" never materialized. The communication of these ideas were done through scholarly conferences, the issuances of books and articles in Muslim magazines, where they were assimilated by the Indonesian scholarly community. Muslim scholars with Western educations were particularly drawn to this proposal and continued its advocacy all the way to the end of the twentieth century.

GUIDED DEMOCRACY AND ISLAM

This debate over Islam and the state was a leading issue until the fall of Liberal Democracy in 1958, when the Guided Democracy state materialized. By decree Sukarno dissolved the constituent

assembly, which put an end to any consideration of an Islamic state. In a stunning surprise the leading Muslim party, i.e., Masjumi, associated with an unsuccessful Outer Islands' attempt to overthrow Sukarno and Javanese control of the republic, and, consequently, the entire modernist Muslim community was discredited politically. Traditionalist Muslim groups remained committed to the Sukarno government and were given political positions to indicate their importance to the Guided Democracy government. In a weakened condition, other Muslim organizations came under attack by leftist groups who acted as agents of President Sukarno in destroying "outmoded" society to make way for the creation of a "post-colonial" state similar to those of the "people's democracies" of the eastern Europe and east Asia. Since the state was authoritarian there was limited effort at creating communication channels for political intercourse with the population. Among Muslim groups, communication diminished astonishingly as the various Muslim associations were forced to disband by leftist and communist discrediting campaigns. The traditionalist Muslim leaders in government were used to deliver speeches and make statements on behalf of government policy, but they had only limited public dialogue with other members of the Muslim community, mostly because of the modernist–traditionalist split and the different views about cooperation or non-cooperation with an authoritarian government.

The Sukarnoist model that was instituted centred intellectually about Sukarno's own political manifesto issued in 1959, which accorded Pancasila the role of state philosophy and pointedly rejected any accommodation with the Jakarta Charter. Moreover the state was restructured on "revolutionary" principles in a system known as "Guided Democracy", wherein traditional thinking was to be set aside for a radically new interpretation of the world found in the "revolutionary" movements of the time.

Sukarno expressed his theories in terms of "anti-colonialism", "overcoming the peoples' suffering", and siding with the "newly emerging forces of the world". These ideas were familiar to the communists and leftists, but alien to the Muslim groups who used an entirely different political vocabulary.

So far as religion was concerned Sukarno put forward the conception of *api Islam* (fire of Islam) as the ideal to guide the Indonesian Muslim community. The "fire of Islam" was said to be the essential spirit of Islam that could be taken from the scriptures and history and used to reformulate the political and social message of contemporary Indonesian Islam. Sukarno was convinced that this fire would be much the same as that of the other revolutionary groups that he promoted, intended to strip away a stagnant mentality promoted by "feudalism and colonialism". As a concluding requirement for all political groups Sukarno called for an acceptance and cooperation of all nationalist factions, which he termed *nasakom*, an acronym referring to "national, religious, and communist" groups which were to cooperate under his guidance.

Sukarno relied on a group of state officials to work out the details of the political manifesto he issued for state guidance as well as other ideological matters. Among them was Ruslan Abdulgani (d. 2005), who gave considerable attention to the "fire of Islam" concept. He elaborated on Sukarno's basic message, explained its features further, assembling arguments that were used not only by the Sukarno government, but, later, by the successor Suharto government. Abdulgani saw a clear relationship of Islam with national identity and asserted that Muslims historically had been associated with the rise of Indonesia and championed its cause. He stated that Islam had shown through its doctrine and its history that it was "anti-colonial" and "anti-imperialistic" and that it had a role to play in the Sukarnoist

era. In particular he noted the leadership of Islamic teachers in the colonial era which had often been in the forefront of anti-authoritarian movements, designed to remove the Dutch and their Indonesian allies from power.

At the same time, Abdulgani asserted, there were weaknesses in the Islamic position, particularly the dated ways of seeing political matters and its association with "outmoded" practices and beliefs that held Muslims back from realizing their potential. He claimed that Muslims had mistakenly labelled leftist political groups as Islam's enemies, when both leftists and Muslims had social justice as a goal and should cooperate in an effort to make it a reality. Properly applied, the "fire of Islam" would purge outmoded habits and make Islam a force for revolutionary action. Abdulgani's line of thinking was nearly identical to that of Haji Misbach in the earlier part of the century.

The Muslim political presence during the Guided Democracy period was limited mostly to the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) association, mentioned earlier, as the chief advocate of Islamic traditionalism, which had Cabinet representation along with several of its allies with similar traditionalist Muslim outlooks. They all accepted, in principle, the general themes of the Sukarnoist state and even formed a foundation to sponsor writing and activities connected with the fire of Islam theme. The ideological constructs set forth by its apologists, such as M. Notosoetarjo (active 1960s), Idham Chalid (b. 1921), and Saifuddin Zuhri (b. 1919), were not well developed, presented little Islamic justification, and their statements were largely a paraphrasing of the statements made by Sukarno, very often those made in the earlier colonial period. The compatibility of Islam, socialism, and nationalism was a recurrent theme.

One additional theme was developed by Saifuddin Zuhri, one-time minister of religion (1962 to 1967), who called on

Muslims to use Islam as a supporter for state policy, particularly in the economic arena, where moral underpinning was regarded as an "absolute requirement" for the new policies in that area. This statement reflected a parliamentary resolution that spoke to the same theme, i.e., that state policies would only be worthwhile if they reflected strong moral principles as a starting point. In this attempt to associate Islam and Sukarnoism, S. Zuhri again noted that Indonesian Muslims were strongly committed to the Indonesian state and wanted the promotion of the general welfare through effective state policies. That commitment of Muslims to Indonesia was a true statement, but Zuhri's attempts to associate Islam with other aspects of Sukarnoist principles, particularly cooperation with communist groups, was problematical.

THE ARMED FORCES AND ISLAM

Another accommodation between the state and religion centred on the chaplains of the Indonesian armed services. The chaplains were recruited from society in general and always had considerable Islamic education as part of their backgrounds, but often were educated in the Dutch or Indonesian national education systems. They were given training in military duties and attitudes when they came into the armed services and they attended officers' "upgrading" sessions as they passed through the ranks, making them essentially "officers" first and "Muslim advocates" second. The communication system that they developed was largely among themselves as chaplains and between themselves and believers as they went about their religious counselling duties in the armed services. They were largely divorced from the larger Muslim community and certainly their attitudes about politics reflected those of the other army officers, who were strongly anti-

democratic and favoured an authoritarian state with themselves one of the controlling institutions.

There was an effort in the early 1960s aimed at bringing Islamic principles and armed forces doctrine into accord, which was ably done by Colonel Muchlis Rowi in several articles written on the subject. He put forward the point of view found among the leading armed forces commanders of the time, especially that of General Abdul Haris Nasution (b. 2000), that Indonesian military morale was based on the army code of honour, on national principles of nationalism, i.e., Pancasila, and on personal religious belief. Rowi presented those points in an intellectual format, seeing "duty" as essential, but also a "fear" of God that would give guidance to all believers in uniform. Chaplains in particular, he argued, needed good training and high commitment to religion so that they would be able to give proper guidance to all military personnel as they faced all the problems of life. As interpreted by M. Rowi and others, this mission for chaplains was centred on military members, but extended at some points into general society as well.

With this intellectual justification largely accepted by the military establishment, several military chaplains were active in promoting activities at the Kebajoran Mosque in the suburbs of Jakarta, which projected a non-communist presence in national affairs through youth activities and various training projects. That civil–military cooperation effort was never really very successful in promoting an intellectual message, but it did bring the chaplains into contact with Dr Hamka, one of the leading modernist Muslims of the time and exposure to him probably assisted the chaplains in their own intellectual formulations.

To summarize the era, the Muslim intellectuals in the age of Sukarno addressed the same issues as other intellectuals, i.e., how to define the nature of the Indonesian state, how to further

standardize Muslim themes of proper community, and, late in the era, how to survive in an age of authoritarianism. The conceptual theme of *Pancasila*, originally formulated by Muslim politicians, was later disowned by Muslim activists because of its failure to include references to Islamic law and its application in Indonesia. Different Muslims managed all three developments, doing the most extensive work with the foundations of the Islamic state and the least effective work on the development of Sukarnoist ideology. In the arena of the development of Islamic law, a low-key proposal for devising a new Indonesian Muslim legalist school captured the imagination of intellectuals, but was void of any real effort to bring it into reality.

Chapter 5

The Early New Order Period

Politically, the early New Order period, from 1966 to 1974, was marked by the rise of an authoritarian state under the leadership of President Suharto, with support from the army, entrepreneurial business, civil servants, a technological elite, and creditor nations from Europe and North America. Political power was consolidated in the national executive, with the legislature having very limited functions and political parties having almost no influence. National economic development was stressed, supported with large loans from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. As a result, financial institutions, the education system, the industrial base, transportation, and communications were all made targets of development. In religious matters the regime attempted to remove Islam from its earlier association with politics, yet still have all religions in the country support the modernization drive as they provided spiritual guidance to the Indonesian citizenry.

Pancasila, discussed earlier, was regarded as the definitive statement concerning the role of religion in the state. Muslims were expected to accept government interpretation of Pancasila without question. Some Muslims had difficulty accepting these limitations, but reluctantly were brought into line during this period. But still this was a transitional time period when very

unsettled political and economic conditions existed at the beginning and which slowly became stable as the New Order government brought competing political groups into line or eliminated them as participants.

At the end of the Guided Democracy era a number of "technocrats" trained in the West, primarily in the United States, had an opportunity to remake government as Indonesian politics shifted from association with the "leftist" states over to association with those nations under the international umbrella of the American-European alliance. The most notable of these newly-educated elites were the economic administrators, termed the "Berkeley Mafia" because several of them received advanced degrees at the University of California (Berkeley). They devised an Indonesian development plan that produced significant results for over thirty years. The creation of this technocratic group, wielding the administrative powers that it did, constituted the single most important development of independent Indonesia. There were also literary and artistic figures of importance and several other scholarly and intellectual elites that were influential. Muslim personalities constituted only a small part of the intellectual activity of the time, and often were considered out of the mainstream by much of the larger Indonesian elite. Nonetheless, these religious intellectuals were expressive of the aspirations of a large section of the population which regarded religion as a central feature of human life. But we must understand that they were not pace-setters for all of Indonesian society, but simply a side-show, even at the height of Muslim intellectual attainment in the 1990s.

CONTINUING INTELLECTUAL FIGURES

The long-running dispute in the Indonesian Muslim community between modernist and traditionalists continued in this period;

it was only in the late New Order era that the two sides agreed to disagree and not make hostile remarks about one another any longer. There were two personalities that expressed the spirit of the two outlooks during this period. Sirajuddin Abbas (d. 1989), representing traditionalism, and Dr Hamka (d. 1981), representing Islamic modernism; both had long careers beginning in the closing decade of the Dutch era and ending in the Suharto era. Both came from families in west Sumatra that had been involved for generations with Islamic education, and both had been prominent in Islamic associations. Abbas served in the late Sukarno government as a ranking official, while Hamka had a reputation as a journalist and fiction writer. Both suffered political disgrace for their particular political associations. Their communication networks were varied: association linkages, student interaction, media coverage, and book publishing, depending on the time-frame they were in. The later writings of both writers were popular among pious Muslims, not only in Indonesia, but in neighbouring Malay-speaking populations of Singapore, Malaysia, and southern Thailand. They were still in use at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Sirajuddin Abbas set forth the traditionalist version of Islam used widely in Indonesia and, as such, he could be considered its intellectual spokesman. The key term he used to identify the traditionalists was *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* (People of the Way and Community), the Indonesian variant of an epithet used widely in the Sunni world indicating "orthodoxy". As described by Abbas the term had historical meaning, implying strong identification with the standard teachings of Sunni Islam, and it could be applied to Muslims in the present who continued to associate with that epithet. He reiterated the importance of "binding authority" of historical scholars on those existing in the contemporary world, but stated that the "authority" rested on interpretation of particular verses of the Qur'an and particular Traditions of the

Prophet. Keeping faith with the scholarly tradition was particularly important as it allowed the correct interpretations framed by historical consensus of the scholars to remain intact and kept the Muslim community from going astray. He regarded modernist Islam with its emphasis on "fresh interpretation" as "appealing" in concept, but too often misleading in actual practice. Abbas's stance was essentially like that of M. H. Ash'ari mentioned earlier, but he gave it a fuller intellectual explanation.

Concerning modernization of society Abbas held that matters of everyday life could easily be changed to fit new lifestyles and existing technology, but those matters ordained by God could not be challenged. Hence the call to prayer was fixed by Traditions of the Prophet, but modern technology could be used in broadcasting that call, as by the use of a loudspeaker. Banks could come into existence for the efficient handling of money, but charging "interest" on loaned money could not be used as a financial technique because it was forbidden by God. Abbas asserted that great care should be taken not to fall into the trap of Westernization where religion became a secondary consideration in life and ceased to be the determining motivation for Muslims. He was equally opposed to modernist Muslim attitudes regarding worship, such as challenging the use of "merit" in undertaking special worship for another person, or in the performance of the "prompting" at grave sites to give last religious instruction to the deceased. Abbas regarded such practices as valid and important, even if modernist Muslims found them questionable. In general, Abbas justified the traditionalist position in a fresh form — he used modern Indonesian writing — in a style appealing to a large group of Muslim Indonesians without apology to the modernists.

Dr Hamka's contributions to intellectual thought centred on a vindication of mysticism within the Islamic tradition and on the creation of a new commentary of the Qur'an, but written

with Muslim modernism in mind. Regarding mysticism, he noted that traditional practitioners of mystical practice up until the early twentieth century had become overly identified with their own mystical experience and had neglected and often disparaged other aspects of Islam — ordinary prayer in particular — which had set them apart from other believers. He also stated that the search for "union with God" had become so pervasive that they no longer regarded the affairs of this world as important, thereby contributing significantly to the loss of its political, economic, and social dynamism among Muslims. He stated that the use of mystical experience to give added meaning to religion was meritorious and could be undertaken by believing Muslims, so long as it did not become an end in itself and that it refreshed and redirected the spirit. Humans must not divorce themselves from the world of which they are a part. This was little different than the view of his father, Haji Rasul, cited earlier, as one of the original Muslim modernists.

Hamka's second major effort, that of the commentary on the Qur'an, was actually part of a larger movement in which no less than six commentaries appeared within the same decade, all produced by prominent scholars or by the Ministry of Religion. Hamka's contribution was lengthy, about twenty volumes, and included full discussions on the importance of each verse or group of verses throughout the entire Qur'an. He included important interpretations from historical scholars and also added material from the history of Southeast Asian Islam, probably the only commentator to do that. It was well received by the modernist community and remained important for decades afterwards.

INTELLECTUALS OF A TRANSITIONAL ERA

A great change in the consideration of religious matters in Indonesia began to take place in the late 1960s and early1970s,

based largely on the introduction of critical thinking, emanating largely from Western universities, where both Western and Islamic scholars were applying the newly developed methodologies of the social sciences. Only a few Muslim Indonesians had been exposed to that influence, but they entered the intellectual arena at this particular time. Muhammad Rasyidi (b. 1915) and Abdul Mukti 'Ali (d. 2004), were pioneers in this effort. Rasyidi was known to have lamented later about opening the way to such studies, finding that too many standard Islamic teachings were challenged, while 'Ali seems to have approved of what came later. Both were educated in Indonesia where they had experienced both Islamic and general education. They both studied abroad: Rasyidi in France and 'Ali in Pakistan and Canada. Both were professors in higher education and much of their effort was communicated through their students and through seminars of professional organizations, scholarly articles, and their own publishing.

Although early Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, particularly Agus Salim and Mohammed Natsir, had used Western materials explaining Islam, they were selective in their choosing and did not embrace Western methodologies as intellectual tools for analysing religion. M. Rasyidi began that process, drawing on a wide number of European and American philosophers and humanists to examine religious behaviour in ways that had not occurred earlier. At the same time he remained firmly committed to very standard Sunni interpretations of Islam espoused by the committed Indonesian Muslims of the time. He used Western learning to justify the religion of Islam as he saw it; it was a defence of Islam, not an attempt to shape or give direction to religion as an instrument of national or ideological policy. In particular he explained the contemporary Western approaches to religion, including those of K. Marx (1883), S. Freud (1939),

and the Positivists (late nineteenth century), and applied their methodologies to major world religions. Significantly he found all religions but Islam wanting, mostly because other religions gave insufficient attention to God in his view and other religions usually lacked a revealed message that could give humans guidance.

Rasyidi's writing was only momentarily important in the brief transition in the late 1960s between presidents Sukarno and Suharto when communism had been discredited and promotion of a Muslim alternative seemed relevant at the moment. However, his message offered no guidance to the overwhelming problems of national development and political reconstruction that faced the Indonesian nation at the time, so it was left to others to undertake that effort.

For his part, Abdul Mukti 'Ali formed several study groups of young scholars late in the Sukarno era to discuss the compatibility of Islam and national mission, particularly the upgrading of the Indonesian nation in economic, political, and social development. The theme of the workshops was that Islam and national development had necessarily to be linked, even as earlier intellectuals had insisted, but 'Ali asserted that Muslims had obligations to make such attempts an important part of their lives and careers. In this effort he was the forerunner of the reconstructionist and neomodernist scholars who followed. In two terms as minister of religion (1971 to 1978) he gave policy direction to this goal in his speeches and directives. He had two commentaries of the Qur'an prepared, in Indonesian, to explain the historical context of the Islamic message and the role of modern humans in continuing the grand tradition of building a high civilization on the order of Andalusia (756 to 1492), the Abbasids of Baghdad (749 to 1257), the Mughals of India (1526 to 1857), and the Ottomans of the Near East (1299 to 1922).

In both commentaries of the Qur'an, 'Ali maintained that at the beginning of Islamic community in the seventh century people who were to become the first Muslims suffered poor conditions and were divided in purpose until the arrival of Islam. The new religious message gave them purpose and allowed them to build civilizations that had hardly been envisioned before. They won a unique place in history because Islam and human endeavour came together. In a second argument 'Ali stated that humans served as the vice-regents of God on earth and were made thinking beings so that they could use the world for good purposes and develop it responsibly. The theme fit well with the national development drives promoted by the Suharto government at the same time. As stated earlier the association of religion and national development proved to be a popular one with the Muslim community of Indonesia in general, so that Islamic schools, mosques and religious associations all issued information that tried to mobilize the population for supporting the modernization drive. This was done even though many Muslims found the Suharto government arbitrary and unkind in its treatment of the political Muslim leadership and often opposed to Muslim political goals, such as application of Islamic law in general Islamic society. This identity with authority that was often punitive was regarded by many as a paradox.

THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST MOVEMENT

The most striking development in religious thinking of the early Suharto period was the rise of the "Islamic reconstructionist movement", launched by the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI; or Muslims' Students League) in the late 1960s, with Nurcholish Madjid (d. 2005), in particular, giving it direction. The HMI leaders were Muslims, mostly educated at national

universities on Java and Sumatra, who had strong backgrounds in the technological and social sciences learning that had been introduced in those schools in the early 1960s. Some of them went on to institutions in the United States, but most went abroad only after their first efforts at creating intellectual models that attempted to bring Muslim values and modernization into harmony. Consequently that foreign experience played a role in the next period, not so much in this one. Still knowledge of Western methodological approaches were generally familiar to them. Only some of them, such as Nurcholish Madjid, had religious training in their background, and very few of them had been to Mecca.

HMI had its own communication system. The membership had ample opportunity to participate in local, regional, and national seminars and conferences. Organizational newsletters were used as well. Eventually the thinking of this group became important enough politically that it received considerable press coverage and the general news media spread the message and the countervailing arguments through news releases and broadcasts. It became a well-known movement nationally.

The expressed goal of the reconstructionists was to transform the Islamic community from a "hidebound" intellectual tradition over to a forward-looking mindset. Promotion of intellectual freedom, pursuit of the idea of "progress", and cultivation of open attitudes towards knowledge and understanding were regarded as necessary to begin the process. The heart of the matter, however, was "secularization", defined to mean separating the transcendental, i.e., dealing with God and salvation, from those matters that should properly be regarded as temporal, i.e., relating to this life. The leading intellectual, Nurcholish Madjid, argued that Muslims had made too much transcendental, which was not really meant to be that way, and that most matters in

human life were intended to be left to the human intellect to decide. New social and political constructs were possible without violating any Islamic tenets. Madjid implied further that the *sunnah* (way) of Muhammad, which was so reverently followed in Islam, was far from complete as an authoritative guide and was subject to additions and reinterpretations.

Another intellectual, Harun Nasution (d. 2000), was also highly controversial because he, like Nucholish Madjid, set aside a long-standing point of orthodoxy for a new interpretation. Initially a journalist, H. Nasution undertook graduate work in Canada, studying with several noted scholars of Islam, including Fazlurrahman, the highly regarded intellectual of Islamic neomodernism. It was the doctor's dissertation of Nasution that caused controversy even before he completed it, and his subsequent writings were circulated widely within the Indonesian Muslim community. The news media played a large role in passing his ideas into society where he received some support and much criticism. But his more lasting communication occurred in his work as a professor at a state Islamic institution in Jakarta where he encouraged students to follow his new approach. Large numbers did, in fact, do that.

Nasution asserted that rationalism was a major movement in Islamic history, i.e., the trend associated with the discredited *Mu'tazilah* (Freethinkers) of the ninth century, whom he claimed had cleared the way intellectually for the rise of classical Muslim civilization; he wanted this trend to reassert itself in Indonesian Islam. While he believed that the *Mu'tazilah* may have gone astray intellectually with their belief that the human mind outweighed the Qur'an as a source of religious knowldege, he held that they had been unfairly castigated by the Sunni scholars of the time and that the extreme reaction to them was unwarranted. Nasution held that the *Mu'tazilah's* great value

was in the academic process, where there was need for teachers and students to be more questioning of standard teaching so as to understand it better, rather than simply accepting standard interpretations as usually happened. Islam would gain by an application of a critical examination of its standard teachings and a great deal more understanding would be exhibited by those who undertook the examination.

The response to this new thought, and particularly to H. Nasution and N. Majid, came from within the Indonesian Muslim community, with critics claiming that these scholars were attacking the basic understanding of the Muslim intellectual message and would destroy standard Sunni Islam. Nasution was viewed as a revisionist historian who would undo the great reforms of the classical era in putting down the *Mu'tazilah* challenge. Madjid and his colleagues were viewed as being too connected with the West and as distorting the intention of classical and medieval Islamic teachings. However, hostility was quieted somewhat by government statements that implied support for the effort of groups attempting to harmonize religious teachings with modernity and national development. After strong criticism had been expressed for some time the minister of religion called for an end to public criticism against Madjid and Nasution, which took the matter out of the press, but allowed it to be talked about in private and organizational circles.

To summarize, the early New Order period was marked by the continuation of intellectual thought from earlier times, although the intellectuals who provided the substance expressed themselves in modern terminology and concepts. But mostly this was an era of transition from the earlier Sukarno era, which had been a period of liberation from colonialism and a restructuring of an independent Muslim state. New lines of thinking had necessarily to develop, especially concerning the theme of

national economic and political development. This era showed that the subject was a prominent concern for many intellectuals with some moving towards Western social science as a means of reconstructing the Islamic message. One particular scholar chose to return to the approach used by a discredited, but intriguing movement in early Islamic history. The political thinking of Muslim intellectuals was immensely changed by the work of the intellectuals of this era.

Chapter 6

The Later New Order Period

The New Order government had a strong hold on the political system of Indonesia by 1974 and continued to rule until the end of the twentieth century, when it was brought to an end in forced elections after the government was unable to weather a severe economic crisis in 1997. During the quarter of century that it ruled with little challenge, it upgraded the economic conditions of the population. Most indicators of progress, such as per capita income, literacy, and graduation rates, indicated considerable improvement, but they were still low by economic standards of Asia. As well, the society was concerned over lack of rights and corruption in government operations. Many elements of society disliked the political system, in large part because it predetermined election results while going through an unconvincing charade of public participation. When the system unravelled, it lost support quickly. But throughout most of the period it was a strong, vibrant, yet authoritarian political system.

THE NEOMODERNISTS

The reconstructionist movement developed into a more advanced stage that was sometimes referred to as the neomodernist

movement. Actually the grouping of intellectuals concerned with this movement was quite large, probably some twenty-five people, who associated with one another and wrote on similar subjects. The most well known were the core group of Nurcholish Madjid, Dawam Rahardjo (b. 1942), and Kuntowijoyo (b. 1943), and two organizational leaders, Abdurrahman Wahid (b. 1940) and Amien Rais (b. 1944), but included Abdul Mukti 'Ali, mentioned above, and Taufik Abdullah (b. 1936), an important Indonesian historian. There were other less well-known members, such as Ahmad Saefuddin (b. 1940), Sjafii Maarif (b. 1939), and Jalaluddin Rahmat (b. 1949). Significantly they were not all Muslim modernists, as a few were from traditionalist backgrounds and some were closer to revivalism than modernism per se. The educations of these intellectuals differed considerably, although all had some form of Islamic training somewhere in their backgrounds. Most had also studied in the West, often at leading universities in the United States or Europe. They communicated through seminars and special organizations, i.e., think-tanks, and discussed their ideas thoroughly at these presentations. Those presentations were then digested for the information media, and also issued as articles in magazines, journals, and books designed to promote thinking in the Indonesian Muslim community. An organization called Paramadina was the most noted of the think-tanks, set up as a pious foundation in Jakarta, which attempted to promote study and education, casting a wider net than simply the Muslim middle class. Similar groups formed in Yogyakarta, Bandung, and Jakarta.

DEFINING THE COMMUNITY

A pivotal point of examination for both the reconstructionists and the neomodernists was the composition and nature of the Islamic

community of Indonesia. J. Rahmat, a scholar from west Java, formulated scenarios for five different Muslim communities that could possibly be operating in the nation. In the first possibility the community could include anyone calling themselves Muslim and, consequently, this choice would encompass most of the population of Indonesia. In that all-inclusive community there would be wide and often differing views of belief and practice existing in Islam and a large number of people who had little knowledge of Islam. In the second possibility the community would comprise people who performed the rites and practices of Islam and had some knowledge about its teachings. This grouping would be smaller than the very wide community, but removed from consideration those who were simply nominal Muslims. In the third possibility the community would consist of people who were well versed in the teachings of Islam and observed its practices daily. This grouping would constitute less than half the population of Indonesia and might be considered restrictive since it would exclude everyone who did not associate daily with Islam in some meaningful manner. In the fourth possibility the community would consist of people who were well versed in Islamic teachings, practised its rites daily, and also belonged to mosque associations, committees to raise funds for the poor, and other religious associations and political parties with definitive Muslim goals. This grouping would constitute only the activists of religion, and, accordingly, would be much smaller than group three, but there would be no doubt about their full commitment to Islam. In the fifth possibility the community would consist of ideologues who regarded Islam as the centre of all human life and would attempt to bring this total commitment to Islam into being in society and the nation. Such a grouping would call for an Islamic state and want laws to be highly reflective of Islamic injunctions and values. Rahmat, like most of the other intellectual

in this grouping accepted the first definition of community, i.e., that anyone claiming to be a Muslim was part of the community. He specifically rejected the fifth case, that of the ideologues, as too narrow and intolerant to be considered representative of an entire community. Significantly neither Rahmat nor the other intellectuals ever considered that they were probably most representative of the second and third groups, which reflected commitment to the idea of a Muslim community.

Kuntowijoyo approached the problem of defining the Muslim community from another perspective, seeing the transition from a rural to an urban society as creating two different world views of Muslims that made it appear that they were different communities. He insisted, however, the two outlooks were merely separate manifestations of the same identification with Islam, but that the institutions and approaches used by Muslims in the two settings were different. In the rural environment there was an Islamic identification with the customary Indonesian world, so that birth, circumcision, marriage, and death ceremonies reflected the natural lives of the rural inhabitants. When Muslims migrated to cities, much of this association with the natural environment was lost and in its place rational order and outlook became paramount. Human organization that reflected city life became the norm, so that the mosque organization and the Islamic association became important mobilization devices of believers. Formal prayers, rites, and ceremonies took on new importance of their own, being separated from the natural world of the rural environment.

Amien Rais added to the discussion of the nature of the Muslim community by defining its relationship to the wider national society of Indonesia. He stated that Muslims had necessarily to operate on two levels, with the first being concerned with the Muslim community itself so that proper Muslim institutions were

constructed and activism was undertaken. The second level of Muslims was concerned with the national society in which the Muslim community had a historical obligation to give guidance to humankind in general and provided insight and institutions that would assist all people in arriving at political and social systems that would serve everyone, Muslim and non-Muslim. Hence, Muslims might be concerned at the first level about the welfare of Muslims, but at another level they had to be concerned about the political rights and the well-being of all Indonesians. Only a united and well-organized Muslim community could undertake both functions and fulfil the religious injunctions to make prescriptions of God function in society for the good of all humans. These three themes — definition of the community, the rural–urban dichotomy, and the broader social and political mission of a well-ordered Muslim community — run through the thinking of nearly all Indonesian Muslim intellectuals in the latter part of the twentieth century.

RATIONALIZING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Without exception the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals of the late twentieth century supported political integration and economic development for the Indonesian nation-state. It could be said that the New Order government was politically powerful enough that Muslim intellectual opposition to its policies would not have been allowed. However, coercion in the matter apparently did not need to occur since there seems to have been genuine Muslim intellectual support for the modernization process in general terms. However, if the intellectuals all supported such development, they also wanted the policies to reflect Islamic values more fully than what the Indonesian administrators had in mind as they applied development theories derived from Western

models. Two views are appropriate to be considered here, those by Ahmad Saefuddin and Abdurrahman Wahid.

Ahmad Saefuddin was originally from west Java, was trained as an agronomist with university work in Germany, taught at an agricultural university, and was active in revivalist activities among university students. His writing was more marked by traditionalist Islam than many other intellectuals in the group, and his strength lay in defining basic religious obligations and their application to life. Significantly he formulated a developmental model that was derived from an overview of the classical canons of Muslim jurisprudence, which he presented in four main points of consideration. The first point asserted that *tawhid* (unity of God) regulated the relationship between God and humans, and hence, all activities regarding development had to be arranged so that they reflected God's ultimate purpose. This relationship was defined in the Qur'an. Second, the major principles of what could be allowed and what was not allowed were important for any development policy. This criterion could be found in the Traditions of the Prophet. Third, there were societal interests that had to be considered in any developmental model, which included the moral and ethnical standards of the community of believers. Lastly, there was the criterion of measuring the benefit of results, which would determine whether economic activities were useful for humans and their environment. This particular model of Muslim jurisprudential values was similar in scope and tone to the examination techniques used by the Nahdlatul Ulama, the leading traditionalist association, when its scholars addressed the issues of national integration and economic development.

Saefuddin asserted that to be considered compatible with Islamic standards any economic development systems used by Muslims must include certain systemic values. Among them were the use of the religious poor tax that all Muslims were obliged

to give for social welfare. As well, the prohibition of usury had to be honoured. Further, there was an Islamic principle that Muslims should cooperate with one another, not compete, which was the opposite of the situation in capitalism. There must also be a social benefit so that everyone in the community would gain from the development. Finally the nation must develop an appropriate economic system that was efficient and fair in producing, distributing, and regulating economic activity. All of these points, of course, further defined the four points of the jurisprudential model he gave at the opening of his remarks.

Abdurrahman Wahid used a different approach. He stated that Muslims disputed modern development theories, i.e., those derived from the West, on four main points. First, modernization treated absolute values as relative, thus changing their importance and character. Obviously Muslims were sceptical about such changes, regarding them as an open attack on perennial Muslim values. Second, modernization challenged Islam's total domination of believers for a citizen's special loyalty to the state, which created split loyalties in the minds of Muslims. Wahid was convinced that Islam was still the first loyalty of all Muslims, notwithstanding government attempts to make the state the primary identification. Third, governments espousing modernization insisted on secularization, which stated that entire areas of human life were to be unaffected by religion. Secularization in Abdurrahman's way of thinking implied a separation of religious values from political aspects, which he held was a long-sustained value of Islam. Fourth, the spiritual life of humans was largely denied, so that outcomes expected by Muslims regarding a pious society were not even recognized as valid. Abdurrahman asserted that piety was a value in itself, even as good behaviour was, both of which were reflections of spiritual values. Such outcomes were not considered as relevant to

most developmental models. On all four accounts, Abdurrahman found serious difficulties with development models fashioned in the West and applied in Indonesia.

Abdurrahman concluded that there were really only two ways for Muslims to deal with such development. In the first approach the society retained a Muslim-dominated culture where values were viewed as more important than modernization, whereby modernization was greatly limited. This had a tendency to create Muslim fanatics who would reject all policies and plans that appeared to have been influenced in any way by Western thinking. That surely was an undesirable alternative. In the second approach Muslims could foster accommodation by undertaking development, but seeking to adjust it with Islamic values. This approach had a tendency to force Muslims to make unacceptable alterations in their own values systems, or that it would happen as a product of erosion. He concluded that Muslims were obliged to work in the space between these two approaches, so that development would occur but that Islamic values would be retained. Despite his pessimistic presentation he did not conclude that an unsatisfactory result was inevitable. He recognized the urgency for development, but was adamant that the Muslim community monitor changes carefully and consistently to assure that Muslim values continued to play a strong role in the operation of society. This was still a more pessimistic portrayal than that of Nurcholish Madjid, which we shall see below.

THE POSITIONS OF THE LEADING INTELLECTUALS

Nurcholish Madjid, recognized as the major dynamo of the movement, struck several general themes during this era, although his work was very broad and inclusive, so it is restrictive

to limit his work to only two examples. The first theme centred on the historical role of intellectuals in Islam, where Madjid claimed that they had always had an important role in casting the basic lessons of Islam in a form that would have relevance to the time in which they were living. In this way the great scholars of Islam, such as Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Taimiyah (d. 1328), and Muhammad 'Abduh were able to keep religion relevant and meaningful to the time. For centuries it refreshed and revitalized Islamic civilization. Madjid argued that when intellectuals stopped this recasting, Islamic civilization declined. This theory of the rise and decline of civilization was not new, of course, but the particular role that Madjid assigned Muslim intellectuals was somewhat unique. It probably draws on the thinking of the fourteenth-century Muslim historian Ibn Khaldun who saw a process of renewal connected with a specific group, but his choice was bedouins rather than intellectuals. Obviously Madjid regarded Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia to have the same mission of making historic Islamic values relevant and productive in contemporary Indonesia. Specifically they had to use care to make sure that the values brought forward and put into a contemporary framework that would be relevant to the Indonesian nation.

The second theme concentrated on Indonesian political life where Madjid supported the New Order government's policy of limiting Islam's political role and specifically not allowing it to become the state religion. In this matter he took the same tact that the nationalists and the military leaders had always taken, namely that Indonesia should be a multi-cultural society and that all religions had something to contribute to national identity. Madjid supported this position with references to Islamic history. He stated that in the classical era of Islam, at Baghdad and Andalusia, Muslim kingdoms had also been multi-cultural as

well and had encompassed Christians, Jews, and others, as well as Muslims, to create superior cultures. In those previous settings Islam had a role in supporting the state and giving advice to rulers so that values would be used in policy-making and in creating the just society. He regarded Islamic principles to be important, but envisioned their enactment through a democratic system in which non-Muslims would have equal status with Muslims and a voice in deciding state direction. Indonesian government leaders, usually leery of the statements of Muslim spokesmen, generally liked his statements and even appointed him to parliament for a term; significantly he voted with the government's faction rather than with the Muslim opposition party.

The second prominent intellectual of this group was Dawam Rahardjo, a trained economist, who contributed several particular lines of thought to the debate on national development. He explained that traditional Islamic learning centred on law, theology, and mysticism, but had not yet addressed more contemporary fields of learning, particularly the social sciences and sciences. As these "new" fields of learning assumed importance in contemporary society, Muslims were not always aware of their importance and had not always stayed current on new developments, which put them behind leaders outside of the Muslim community. Rahardjo maintained that new explanations were needed to relate Islamic scriptures to the disciplines dominating human interest today, such as economics, scientific development, and political science. In his own studies of the Qur'an, for example, he used the social science concepts of dependent and independent variables to study its themes, content, and lessons.

As well, Rahardjo did considerable work with modern economic development and held the view that application of standard Western economic theory had to be reinterpreted for

countries outside Europe and North America where different conditions existed than in the Western world where the methodologies had been developed. He insisted that Muslims could take a leading role in that reinterpretation, but must understand the original Western theory as a starting point. This particular call for adjustment of developmental theory to non-Western areas was in keeping with the views of many other intellectuals throughout the world, Muslim and non-Muslim. Still it was not an area of concern where Muslims had done enough work to overcome the shortages of trained personnel in the social science and science fields.

Kuntowijoyo , a Javanese playwright, poet and general critic of intellectual trends, used social history and social science approaches in his studies of Islam to provide insight into the legacy and contemporary institutions of Indonesian Islam. For example, in a study of nineteenth-century Java he contended that the growth of cities and the urbanization of Muslims manifested itself in new ways of thinking that caused a split in perceptions among Muslims in the two environments. The outcome was the eventual foundation of new movements facing off against one another, such as the NU and the Muhammadiyah, representing respectively the rural and urban populations of Islam. The insight explained why the Muslim modernist and traditionalists saw the world so differently. Significantly, he did not lament historical change, but contended that humans had necessarily to adjust to changing conditions. He urged the development of "research and development" centres in religious associations in order to study and use new knowledge more effectively, a theme developed by Amien Rais as well.

In another study, Kuntowijoyo reviewed the historical role of the mosque, which he asserted was intended by the Prophet Muhammad to be a central institution for the Muslim

community. He repeated the charge made by Syafii Maarif and others, that classical and medieval political rulers had subverted the Prophet's intention and made their own palaces the centre of Muslim life, thereby downgrading mosques to a lesser position. Again, he did not call for government or politics to be connected with the mosque — in fact he called for politics to be removed from the mosque as being too divisive — but, rather, that the mosque become an instrument for Muslim social action. If that were to happen the issues of poverty and social ills could be addressed through the combined goodwill of the community of believers. This was a theme also developed by Abdul Mukti 'Ali who noted particular use of libraries, child care centres, marriage counselling, youth activities, and legal assistance centres at various mosques in Indonesia. In general an expansion in the use of mosques for ancillary activities beyond worship was popular throughout Southeast Asia.

THE REVIVALIST REACTION

Beginning in the 1970s, concern with upgrading religion in the lives of believers became a priority in the minds of many Muslim activists in various parts of the world and it manifested itself in the formation of new groups and a host of activities in Southeast Asia in particular. Known as *dakwah* (revivalism), i.e., its advocates sponsored activities, especially training sessions, to make Islam the centre of the believer's life and to have Muslims rededicate themselves to fulfil the duties of religion with renewed fervour and piety. Actually *dakwah* was not a new phenomenon, but had a long history in Islam, with one historical wave in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries responsible for the spread of Islam into the Southeast Asian region. In its modern form it was very apparent in the tabligh (intensification) sessions of the NU,

Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam movements beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, which were held in both urban and rural areas.

The successor groups in the late twentieth century used speeches, organized special "information sessions", issued taped recordings of their talks, and published magazines and newsletters. Some wrote books. Syahminan Zaini (b. 1933), a writer in Surabaya, and the Media Dakwah, a group in Jakarta, illustrate this trend. Zaini was generally moderate, seeing Muslims as the vice-regents of God on earth, who were expected to use God's guidelines to create a well-ordered world, and to construct regulated and moral societies. Media Dakwah was harsher in tone, using a strong anti-West rhetoric, especially labelling U.S. imperialism and the Zionist "conspiracy" as leading a deliberate onslaught against Islamic interests throughout the Muslim world. Accordingly Muslims who accepted ideas from the West or saw the West as having something worthwhile to offer to Muslims, were not only misguided, but placed the very status of their belief in jeopardy. Media Dakwah regarded the Muslim intellectuals as particularly suspect in that regard.

Indonesian Muslim intellectuals were of two minds about revivalism, giving it support in general, yet finding the movement that furthered it not entirely to their liking. Abdul Mukti 'Ali supported revivalist work among rural Javanese groups with weak ties to Islam and Kuntowijoyo had similar attitudes about revivalist work in both rural and urban areas, although he noted that different techniques needed to be used according to environment. But 'Ali noted as well that when dealing with a nominal Muslim population, revivalists should treat such people with respect, and that they be led to an understanding of Islam without coercion or undue pressure. Both Kuntowijoyo and 'Ali asserted that some of the difficulty with revivalists was the

nature of their past training, where they had been immersed in standard religious instruction. They did not have much training in understanding the life settings, work, and values of the people they were targeting. This led to basic misunderstandings and even animosity. As much as the enthusiasm of the revivalists was admired, enthusiasm alone could not get the task accomplished without some ancillary training in wider fields relevant to the societies in which they operated.

'Ali stated that there was an important field open for revivalists to deal with young scientists and graduates in the technologies, who resisted Western models of separation of religious values and scientific theory. He maintained that well-trained revivalists could assist in arriving at new understandings of how religion and science/technology interrelate. He warned, however, that scientific training was needed by the revivalists to understand the dilemma on an appropriate level, lest the scientists reject the revivalists as not really understanding the problem. This call for revivalists to become more fully informed about the nature of the contemporary world was a continuing theme among the writings of the entire intellectual group.

GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS TO DIRECT MUSLIM INTELLECTUAL DIALOGUE

After Abdul Mukti 'Ali's tenure as minister of religion the office was given to members of the military-administrative group that was a firm supporter of the New Order. These new ministers had weak ties to the Indonesian Muslim community. It was clearly an attempt to control the religious establishment and to continue to "tame" Islam as was noted in an earlier chapter. Of the three that served between 1980 and 1998 Ratu Perwiranegara Alamsjah (b. 1925) had the most strained relations with the Muslim

community leadership, perhaps because it fell to him to enforce several unpopular decisions regarding the superiority of national goals over religion. This trend was illustrated in making Pancasila the primary ideal for all of Indonesian society. His writings, presented in intellectual format, asserted that Pancasila was originally formulated by Muslims and was, hence, a gift by them to the nation, so that they (the Muslims) should logically support it. That claim was widely regarded as a ruse to foster support for Pancasila, which had become something different than what was originally intended in the minds of many Muslims.

The second minister, H. Munawir Sjadzali (b. 1925), was a career diplomat who was convinced that Muslims could implement the laws of God in their own personal lives and perhaps in the operation of the Muslim community. He started from the premise that Islamic law could only be applied if Muslims fully realized that the contemporary world was complex and ever changing. Hence any law codes established earlier probably would not have relevancy to contemporary conditions. Accordingly, new thinking would have to be done to transform the principles of the earlier codes over to modern conditions. He called on Indonesia's Muslim intellectuals to provide such guidance and to avoid simply accepting jurisprudence from bygone times and from the Middle East since they would not relate to contemporary Indonesia. In this outlook he was reminiscent of Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy and Hazarin at mid-century, although Sjadzali saw time as the vital element, not geography as the earlier thinkers did.

The third minister, H. Tarmizi Taher (1936) had been a high-ranking medical doctor in the navy. During his tenure as minister there were growing differences between the Muslim and Christian community, and he sought to address the situation with a series of conferences and speeches on the subject of religious

harmony. His own conclusions were that there was actually little discrimination in Indonesian society based on religion itself, but that economic and ethnic factors were heavily at play, which was probably an accurate assessment. His effort to foster cooperation did bring Indonesians of different faiths together to discuss issues and act as a vanguard for an inter-faith dialogue, but it was not successful enough to withstand the disorder of the later 1990s when the Indonesian economy suffered a severe failure. At that time all the weaknesses of society became apparent and inter-religious competition and violence occurred at several places in Indonesia. The ministers certainly employed an intellectual side to their consideration of some issues, but mostly they were concerned with the policies of the government and garnering support for them. Their efforts in intellectual discourse seldom rose above direct policy considerations. The case of Sjadzali's concern for the adaptation of a new Muslim law was perhaps the lone exception.

The final development concerning Muslim intellectuals in the Suharto era was the creation in 1990 of an organization called the Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia (ICMI; or Islamic Intellectuals' Association of Indonesia). The formation of the association seems to have been a spontaneous development in which the leading figures of government and several groups of educated professionals decided such an organization was needed to serve their mutual interests. With the tacit approval of President Suharto and the direct involvement of Vice-President Habibie (b. 1936), many of the Muslim intellectuals joined the new organization. Some intellectuals stayed away, regarding the association as a government effort to control the vibrant Muslim intellectual community operating free of direct government control. But university and professional people, often those with minimal training in Islam, saw it as an opportunity to gain more

knowledge of Islam and to mix with people who did understand it. The government leaders apparently viewed the association as a means of overcoming Muslim resentment towards the regime at a time when New Order policies were under general criticism in the society, especially in regard to corruption. The organization received heavy coverage in the press and in news magazines and an elaborate regional and local organization was created to recruit widely among people with university education in their background. There were frequent meetings at all levels and many seminars and conferences which received coverage by the media.

Intellectually the movement did not substantially promote any definable lines of thinking that assisted in clarifying the role of the Muslim community and government development programmes. Time was perhaps too short for that. However, it did cause a great controversy among the entire Indonesian elite about whether the association itself was a good thing or not. The sponsorship of such an association by the government raised the question as to whether the government's own criteria for keeping Islam away from special status was being violated. Several Muslim personalities, especially Abdurrahman Wahid, mentioned above, expressed the opinion that the move had severely damaged the New Order's credibility. The association lost its salience after 1997 when the New Order came under heavy political attack and President Suharto was forced from office. It survived beyond the New Order era and became a contributor to the open politics of the democratic era that followed in the early years of the twenty-first century. There were indications later that it was training another wave of young Muslim intellectuals to carry on the long tradition.

To summarize, the late New Order era saw Muslim intellectuals almost entirely absorbed in discussing the role of religion in

state policy. In particular they supported government action in promoting economic development and in limiting the role of Islam in politics, and they laid out the rationale in Islamic terms for such support. The movement also produced two intellectual figures — Nucholish Madjid and Harun Nasution — whose thinking challenged past Muslim assumptions about the Muslim place in contemporary world. The government attempted to gain greater control over Muslim intellectuals late in the era by sponsoring an intellectual association, but it did not immediately develop into a forum for the presentation of new or expanded Islamic thinking.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

Indonesian Muslim thinking reflected the major political developments of twentieth-century Indonesia. Accordingly, the creation and development of the Indonesian state was a central focus of their thinking. Further, the intellectual constructs that were presented were generally consistent with well-accepted notions in Sunni Muslim intellectual history, but at least twice prominent thinkers departed from orthodoxy. Those two ventures — concerning the superior place of reasoning in thinking and the use of a type of secularism — were not universally accepted by Indonesian Muslims, but they provided a leaven that was important in the progress of the intellectual movement that would not have happened otherwise. Overall, that thinking had several important features.

1. The creation and perpetuation of an Indonesian nation-state was important to nearly every intellectual in the group, with the possible exception of the first case at Aceh. It is apparent that nearly all identified with that state, wanted it to come into being before it existed, and supported it after it was created. If developments concerning the Indonesian state did not always go the way these intellectuals wanted it to, they generally did not give up hope and even adjusted their thinking to accommodate their identification with it. There were only a few exceptions to this trend.

2. The intellectuals identified with three Islamic communities. There was a historical Muslim community, identified especially with the Islamic Golden Age in the Middle East, which was referred to as the high point of Muslim civilization and as a model to be emulated. There were many references to such a historical community. There was a contemporary worldwide community of believers, which was implied but seldom given much attention, but recognized as existing and having some vague relevance to Indonesian Muslims. There were only a few indirect references to such a worldwide community. The third community was that of Indonesian Muslims which was regarded as having commonality, as striving for a historical mission, and as an important factor in determining the direction the Indonesian state should take. Significantly this Indonesian Muslim community was broadly defined so that anyone claiming to be a Muslim was considered to be part of the community. The Indonesian community was considered most important and consumed most of the energy of these intellectuals.
3. Views of the West were mixed. Many of the intellectuals expressed concern about Westernization and cautioned about its dangers, seeing it as a distinct peril to traditional Islamic values. A great many of the intellectuals, however, were fascinated by what the West had accomplished economically and wanted some sort of emulation, without accepting total Westernization. Finally many were drawn to the intellectual concepts of the West and, in some cases embraced those concepts, finding them useful for the amplification of their own intellectual constructs. However, even those who were greatly attracted urged caution in dealing with things Western and recognized that there was danger in doing so.

4. There were many issues that the intellectuals did not address in a significant way. Human rights were largely ignored except for general statements that Islamic teachings promoted harmony among people. Women and emancipation was dismissed with the standard Muslim statement that women and men had different roles and that Islam accorded great honour to women. The issue did not receive adequate attention by the intellectuals, and they did not take cognizance of the tendency among Indonesian women to examine the relationship themselves. Environmental considerations as part of the development process was brushed over with statements that Muslim administrators saw this as part of the "steward" role that Muslims received from God. Again, several non-governmental associations were concerned about environmental issues and found most leaders and intellectuals across the nation too accepting of the considerable environmental damage that accompanied economic development. Undoubtedly these issues were given little attention because they were not leading topics of discussion in wider Indonesian society, but they also indicate that Indonesian Muslim intellectuals were not particularly forward-looking to the degree they might have been in dealing with rising problems of social and political problems.
5. Indonesian Muslims were defensive in spirit, regarding Islamic values under attack and seeking arguments that would enable the Islamic community to assert its continued relevance. Moreover, the arguments put forward do not appear to be addressed to the wider Indonesian nation in either style, argumentation, or setting. Neither was there a lot of reaction to Muslim thought, except perhaps during the early Sukarno years when Muslim calls for an Islamic state were part of the

general political dialogue on the future of the Indonesian state. Otherwise there was a minimum of interaction with intellectuals outside of the Muslim community itself. Actually, it may be that the Muslim intellectuals were talking with one another and with their own followers rather than they did with the larger Indonesian community or any other outside group. Hence, all this intellectual production may have been intended, surely unwittingly, mostly for the Muslim community itself and with clarifying for that community just what role Islamic values would have in an Indonesian nation-state and what form such values would have in state documents, state policy, and state institutions. If that was the case, and a strong case can be made for it, then the major role of interacting with the general population, and particularly members of the other religious communities, has yet to be done in a significant way. Perhaps that might be the task of another generation of Muslim intellectuals.

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